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# Lutheran World

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Official  
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of the  
LUTHERAN  
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FEDERATION

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# LUTHERAN WORLD

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*Therefore we speak truly when we confess in our creed that we believe in one Holy Christian Church; for it is invisible, and lives in the spirit in a place where no one can come. Thus we cannot see its holiness. For God has hidden and veiled it from us by human frailty, sins and errors, by manifold sufferings and offenses, that we should be unable to find it anywhere with our senses.*

*People who do not realize this are easily offended and even consider themselves as excluded from the church when they see frailty, sin, and other defects among those who are baptized, hear the Gospel and believe.*

*But when those who have such thoughts about the church repeat from the creed "I believe in one Holy Christian Church" they immediately distort the meaning of this article. For such human justice and feined holiness is in truth nothing but spiritual sorcery by which both the eyes and the hearts of men are dazed and seduced from the recognition of right and true holiness.*

Luther, Lecture on Galatians, 1535

*Our churches teach that one Holy Church is to continue forever. The church is the congregation of saints in which the gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered. The unity of the church requires only agreement concerning the doctrine of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Human traditions rites or ceremonies need not be uniform, as Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 4: "One body, and one spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism."*

Augsburg Confession, Art. VII

HANNS LILJE

## Editorial

Christendom is committed to bear public witness to its Lord. The Lutheran Church is aware of this and acts accordingly. This attempt to edit the official organ of The Lutheran World Federation in a new and better form, stems from our desire to render our public witness more and more effective. If the church is to live, it must heed the words of the Apostle (1. Pet. 3,15), that we must be ready to keep up the exchange of questions and answers concerning our faith, with the world to which we must bear witness. That is the aim of this review.

Besides, the moment is propitious for a critical appraisal of the Lutheran Church throughout the world, that should help us to determine the rôle that we have to play within Christendom as a whole and in the ecumenical discussions that have become so lively in our day. That kind of self-appraisal should by no means ignore those positive traits that attract the observer's attention. On the other hand we should not forget to review both carefully and critically what we have achieved until now.

### I.

The common desire to help those in need has been one of the most important factors in making Lutherans conscious of themselves and of their mission and showing them the need for a better common organization. We believe that this has not been without significance for the history of the church. Twice within recent times a similar development has taken place. When the Lutheran World Convention was founded in 1923 as the first joint organization of world Lutheranism, that was largely due to the need for helping the Lutheran churches of Central Europe. The same reasons were apparent when the aftermath of the second world war with all its distress again made the Lutheran churches of the world willing to help. That was true particularly of the churches of America and Scandinavia. The Lutheran churches of Germany will long remember what was done for them at the time. What happened then is significant both on the human level and on that of church history, for it bears out some-



thing that is full of piquancy for the dogmatician: the church that believes in justification by faith, that esteems nothing so highly as loyalty to the confessions and dogmatic truth, yet is activated more by love than by faith. The result is a kind of silent apologetics that has its bearings both on the dogmatic and on the ecumenical conversations of today. For it disarms the suspicion that the Lutheran Church is primarily characterized by the pretension to know everything better than anyone else.

Naturally, we have not recalled these memories merely so as to glorify the Lutheran church, but in order to explain a fundamental principle. There can be little doubt that the Lutheran church of our times has not progressed in knowledge whenever and wherever it has realized the importance that love has for faith. The best example is the importance that the idea of Stewardship has gained for the whole of Lutheranism. In this context America has for the first time exerted an important influence on both the theology and the practical church life of the European continent. The Stewardship idea shows that dogmatic definitions are of value only on condition that they be taken up, confirmed and put into practice through concrete acts of obedience on the part both of individual Christians and of the church's congregations. Stewardship rightly understood is equivalent to a program for putting Christ into all aspects of daily life. The need for Christian obedience, that the church of the middle ages expressed in the great idea of the imitation of Christ has thus again been made real, but this time by Lutheranism, and in a new, original form, grown out of the Gospel message. These new insights that the Lutheran Church has gained, need to be thought out in detail. Our systematic theologians must show us, how the theology of justification by faith is completed in the practical sphere by a theology of Stewardship.

## II.

One of the peculiarities of our times is that the principles of the Reformation, as they were formulated in the 16th century, have again become important and significant for the problems of our world.

This is not the place for describing in detail the great theological renewal of the last thirty years, that began with Karl Barth. In what we shall say further on we shall have to presuppose that theological renewal and its results.

It seems as if the great spiritual struggle, that characterized the 16th and 17th century, were to be repeated in our age. This is true not only of the various churches' position in public life and the problems that this question raises. The efforts that the Roman Church is now making in various parts of the world, are known well enough. These efforts include the creation of Roman Catholic bishoprics in Scandinavia, that are as significant for the Roman Church's policy as they are insignificant numerically; the interesting, though somewhat mysterious, attempts at gaining influence in Central Europe and especially in Western Germany; and the massive outbreaks of intolerant Roman confessionalism in Spain and certain parts of South America. But none of these actions are really essential. In any case it seems doubtful whether they can be successful in the long run. What is more important is that the Roman Church is very thoroughly examining a number of fundamental problems concerning the relation of Christendom to questions of public life, economics, education and especially politics. The great historical upheavals of our era have made us feel more frequently and more intensely than ever before, the common Christian responsibility that links Roman Catholics and Protestants. On the other hand the discussions show that the differences between us are not merely questions of method or other secondary factors. They reach to the very roots of our churches and show how different our understanding of faith and religion really is. These differences are apparent in the churches' cultural ideas, their educational programs and their political ethics. Is it not true that the attitude of the Lutheran church in these fields is determined merely by otherworldliness or by passivity vis-à-vis all aspects of our earthly life. Protestant Christians — here Lutherans and Calvinists are at one — seek the ordinances of God in the world. True service of God is possible only within the framework of these ordinances that God has given to the world. We do not believe that the world can be christianized by a heightening of its own natural possibilities. We know that our life and all that we do must be determined by faith in forgiveness and justification, by hope in the future revelation of God's glory and by the framework that God's ordinances provide for us in this world. It is not true that the Lutheran doctrine of the justification of the sinner must as a matter of principle result in a program of otherworldliness. On the contrary, in all the contexts that we have mentioned it is a starting-point of great significance for all aspects of life in this world. We can hardly deny that the Lutheran Church is burdened with many a heavy historical mortgage. In some places we are paralysed by a false



conception of "inwardness". Elsewhere our development has been hampered by centuries of symbioses with the European state-church-system. But historical mortgages of this kind have today lost more of their significance than most people believe. Since the end of the first world war the Church is no longer tied to the state in Germany, where the state-church system had wielded the strongest influence. Today it has lost all significance. Furthermore the theological renewal that began with Karl Barth has practically put an end to all attempts at misinterpreting Lutheran spirituality as if it were nothing but pious "inwardness".

Together with all other parts of Christendom, the Lutheran church is faced with the task of interpreting its Christian mission anew in a world, the political and social structure of which has entirely changed. In its worship, teaching and cure of souls it must put its mission into practice. The scope of this mission is so great that it needs what is practically a new beginning on our part. In view of this it is comforting to know of the Lutheran Church's solidarity with the rest of Christendom in this matter.

### III.

It follows from this that we must add a comment on the need for the Lutheran Church to re-think its ecumenical mission. Here, too, our Church stands in line with others and is in no way different from them, though some people think otherwise.

What the Lutheran Church has experienced in this field has in an equal measure been the experience of the other Christian churches: the better they learned to know one another, the stronger grew their consciousness of their diversity and the more difficult the question, how far churches, whose basic conceptions were so different, could still speak of unity.

In the course of this process the Lutheran Church has sometimes been suspect as a disturbance and an hindrance in ecumenism. The reason for this is our principle that there can be no church unity without unity of doctrine and confession. Yet there is nothing peculiar or extraordinary about this principle. The Roman Catholic, the Orthodox and the Anglican Church teach exactly the same. The Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church even teach that they alone possess the truth on which unity must be based. Thus both on principle and in practice they are more rigid about this than the Lutheran Church. After all, the principle that we have mentioned

does but enunciate something that should be obvious for every church that takes itself seriously, i. e. that without theological clarity there can be no unity among Christians.

It cannot be the demand for doctrinal unity that distinguishes the Lutheran Church to the extent of giving it a position all of its own within the ecumenical movement. What the Lutheran Church teaches about the Lord's Supper, intercommunion and the significance of the Lord's Supper can be no more divisive than the parallel convictions of other churches. We shall have to look elsewhere for the particular contribution that the Lutheran Church must make to the ecumenical conversations of our times. The Lutheran Church is persuaded that unity of faith in Jesus Christ is more important than unity of organization. Moreover, every attempt to unite the church into one organization without giving first place to unity of faith and confession is in danger of leading to untruth. But the greatest Lutheran contribution to the ecumenical movement is what the Lutheran Confessions say with all the desirable clarity: It is Christ's presence in Word and Sacrament that makes the Church what it is. There is no other decisive characteristic of the Church than the presence of Christ. If the Church is constituted by the presence of Christ, all other differences are reduced to secondary importance. This factor that constitutes the Church is also the only one that justifies schism. No other element really justifies the separation of the churches. The Lutheran contribution to ecumenicity is therefore this, that if the Lutheran Church take its theological principles seriously, it must recall Christendom to the heart of the matter in hand. The unity of the Church is not furthered if each party merely asks the others to abandon what seems important to them. The only way is for all of us so to keep in mind the presence of Christ in Word and Sacrament. Then all other questions become secondary. If Christendom could thus understand its ecumenical task, all unnecessary controversies would cease. The voice of truth would be heard above all other voices and the unity of the Church would be marked by what characterized the ancient church: "The Church was at rest and was edified." (Acts 9,31).



JULIUS BODENSIECK

## Translated Theology?

It is not my intention to enter upon a discussion of the latest attempt to revise the King James Version of the Bible or contemporary efforts to bring Martin Luther's German translation of the Bible up-to-date, attempts which only prove that no version of the Bible is final and perfect and that the Church must continually seek the best possible means for conveying the message of the Bible to successive generations of men.

Nor do I intend to concern myself today with the program of demythologizing the New Testament which is associated with the name of Professor Rudolf Bultmann although it deals with the very heart and center of the problem of translating the message of salvation into terms which are intelligible to modern man, to anxiety-ridden, fear-filled, security-seeking modern man, and although the exegetical department of a theological seminary, particularly a Lutheran seminary, cannot afford to side-step the issue of biblical hermeneutics which is one of the most important problems under discussion in European theology today.

I should like to say a few things today about a much simpler topic, namely about the possibility and necessity of translating theological books and articles from one language into another and of sharing our theological insights with the other members of our world-wide Lutheran Church.

Far be it from me to claim any degree of competence in the field of translating; all I possess is a long experience in translating theology from German into English and from English into German. Particularly the past six or seven years were devoted to a considerable extent to the attempt to interpret the thinking of theologians from both sides of the Atlantic ocean to one another, at conferences or academies or commission meetings or the conventions of the Lutheran World Federation at Lund and Hannover. It is about some of the things that I have learned in the course of time in this respect that I would like to talk to you today.

## I

My first definite conviction is that theological translating is extremely difficult and often hazardous.

Business English may be easily translated into its exact French or Swedish or German equivalent. But even here the same word does not always mean the same thing in different languages. For instance, an American billion is a one followed by nine zeros, a German billion has 12 zeros. Still, by and large, a business letter, or a news story, or a legal document, or even a novel presents no insuperable difficulties.

The moment we begin to translate ideas from one language to the other, our troubles begin to mount.

For one thing, words have a distracting way of changing their own meaning in the same language. At the time of King James "conversation" denoted "conduct, walk of life," now it means nothing but talk, perhaps even small talk. Once upon a time "mission" denoted the Church's efforts to rescue the unsaved, to save the godless, to bring home those who are lost; now it refers to bombing flights where the purpose is destruction. "Inspiration" was reserved formerly for the Holy Spirit's operation in His chosen vessels, now it is applied to a sentimental address or a football coach's between-the-halves pep talk.

Another disquieting habit of words is to assume different meanings in different languages although remaining outwardly identical. In English you are "sensible" if you form rational deductions, apply common sense in your daily conduct, live within your means, are a good neighbor; but when a German is *sensibel* he is touchy, sensitive, easily offended, hard to get along with. "Eventually" in English means that something will occur, quite definitely, yes certainly, and the only point left in doubt is the precise moment when it will occur; but *eventuell* in German means "perhaps, under favorable circumstances, possibly and perhaps probably" but by no means certainly. In English we express "sympathy" when someone has sustained a great loss; we literally feel and suffer with him; but German *Sympathie* is the personal affinity or congeniality between two individuals. "Pamphlet" denotes a 16 or 32 page brochure; but *Pamphlet* is filled with vicious polemic and invective. A German *Diakon* is not the same as an Anglican deacon nor the same as an American Lutheran deacon. A German *Mirakel* does not mean miracle but little more than an astounding stunt, a magician's trick.



Moreover, even when words look alike and convey the same meaning, quite often they differ slightly because different vibrations of connotation are set in motion. English "lust" is almost sure to denote sinful covetousness, wrongful desire, wicked longing, although the adjective "lusty" does not share this meaning and may be used to describe a two-base hit; but the German *Lust* is quite neutral and the adjective *lustig* simply means cheerful and gay. In America a theologian is probably a professor of theology or at any rate a person who devotes much time and study to the science of theology; but in German anyone who is ordained (or looks forward to ordination) is a *Theologe*. An American "academy" may be a small church-owned high school, but a German *Akademie* likes to resemble its ancient Athenian predecessor.

One may well become sceptical when considering these verbal difficulties and ask whether verbal forms of expression are at all repeatable. Wilhelm von Humboldt said in a letter to Goethe that in every translation the finest distinctions and most significant shadings get lost, inevitably and irretrievably, and that even when they are not totally lost they have decreased in strength and impressiveness. A modern translator who has successfully translated much English prose writing into German, says that every act of translation involves a change; that if the translator is careful and successful, the rose may indeed remain a rose, but it is no longer a red rose but a white one, and he concludes that the translator's task is *hoffnungslos* — which is probably two or three degrees stronger than "hopeless". Another translator says that when you pour wine from one bottle into another, you always lose some of the precious liquid.

But these are not the only difficulties which beset the translator's path. So far we have assumed that he fully comprehends the meaning of the original; but the question is, does he always? I remember in translating Professor Suess' lecture before the theological section of the Hannover convention that he had used the word *gefasst* in connection with the relation between good works and faith and concluded after some doubt that he had used it in the same way in which Luther used it in the Small Catechism, in the part on Baptism, "in Gottes Gebot gefasst," that is to say, closely connected with, bound up with, surrounded by, encased in. The resulting meaning was fairly lucid and comprehensible and biblical; but it did not represent the ultimate meaning of Professor Suess; what he wanted to set forth was the idea that good deeds are not merely the result of faith, or an outflow of faith, or inseparably connected with

faith, but that they are present in and with faith, immediately, and without any causal connection whatever.

And after the translator has done his best and has faithfully reproduced his text in another language, he still faces the dreadful possibility that his translation may be misinterpreted. Perhaps he need not worry excessively about this possibility for, after all, the original is also liable to misinterpretation. He, as well as the author, faces here the age-old problem of the relation between *res* and *verbum*, between the thing or the idea to be set forth in human words and the words available for this purpose.

## II

Having reached this low point, close to despairing of ever succeeding in his task, the translator of theological literature should remind himself of the fact that it is theology which he is translating, and that theology deals with the Word of God, and that theological literature in some way or other rests upon this Word of God. The Word of God as we refer to it at the present moment, is the Bible. The Bible as we use it here and now, is a translation; whether we speak English or German or Swedish, it is the translated Bible that lies on our table. No one will deny that the Bible has been most successfully translated, frequently, in the past and today. The miracle has happened time and again: man's innate spiritual blindness has been healed and he has been given eyes to see and read; man's contempt and hatred of God has been overcome and he has been given ears to hear and listen and obey; man's selfish sinful heart has been changed and he has learned to love God and His Word. Hearing His Word, accepting it, appropriating it, believing it is all one; learning God's purpose, trusting in His love and grace, understanding His will, he can now—be his vocabulary ever so limited—praise the great saving acts of God and adore his Savior Christ. His tongue is loosed, he can speak to his neighbor, he can translate the message into his or his neighbor's words.

Unquestionably, this is a miracle done by the Holy Spirit. Compared with this ever recurring miracle, the theological translator's problem is relatively insignificant, especially if both he and the theological author whom he is translating are willing and eager to listen to the Word of God.

It may not be altogether amiss if I refer here to my own experience as a translator. Invariably my work proceeded more speedily and



smoothly and happily when the authors were moving within biblical concepts and lines of thought than when they argued, with the aid of inductive or deductive logic, for or against this or that theory. I may also say that whenever my German authors quoted Martin Luther, a tingling feeling of joy ran up my spine, not only because Luther's language is always direct and concrete but because I found him much easier to translate than his twentieth-century colleagues on account of his Bible-inspired and Bible-breathing diction. Who would dare to assert that Luther's insight into the Word of God was smaller or more superficial than that of modern theological professors, be they American or German or Scandinavian? Yet, none of them comes even close to Luther in expressing these insights in simple, yet forceful words.

I would even go one step farther and ask: are any person's words more translatable than those of Jesus? Did any great teacher ever use simpler words than He? "I am the way;" "I am the good shepherd;" "Blessed are the pure in heart;" "Father, forgive them;" "Go ye into all the world;" "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the earth." None of us would dare to assert that Jesus would have been unable to use Ciceronian sentences and Aristotelian syllogisms; nor would any of us dare to assert that any thinker or teacher or prophet or professor has ever expressed deeper truth than He did. His words are divine, but they are the most human of all words. Matthias Flacius expressed it perfectly when he said that in Christ God *humanissime allocutus est*; in Christ God addressed us in the most human, most graphic, most comprehensible manner.

All this should be self-evident. For it is the Word of God of which we are speaking, and it is the nature of a word, even yours and mine, that it is heard, that it wants to be heard. Only insane and irresponsible persons babble by themselves and talk to themselves. When God speaks, He will be heard. He speaks in order to be heard. His Word is like a hammer, and like a consuming fire, and a two-edged sword; and even if it is a still small voice and a gentle knock on our door, it is not to be ignored. Luther once said, God has a mighty plow with which to work in the field of this earth, and the name of it is *Dixit*. God does not speak in generalities, nor does He speak in vain; He addresses you and me, personally and directly: Where art thou? Thou art the man! Follow thou me! His word is inescapable because it is His word. When I hear His word, I know it is His, and I understand it. In the present context this means that it is translatable, more translatable than any other word because God wants His Word to be understood. And if this is so, in spite of

all the difficulties and in spite of all my own inadequacy and incompetence, I need not despair when translating Lutheran theological literature. It may be difficult, but it is not impossible.

### III

Moreover, translating Lutheran literature is positively necessary.

Our Lutheran Church is not organized in such a way that everyone speaks the same language. We have no "sacred" Latin or other universal language. Nor is the Lutheran Church, like some of the other Protestant communions, confined to one language, or just a few languages. Practically all Anglicans speak English, do they not? And so do most of the Methodists, and most of the Baptists, and most of the Congregationalists, and probably all Disciples, and also most of the Presbyterians. But our Church is not only the largest Protestant communion but also the most multilingual. In Europe alone there are at least 25 different languages spoken in Lutheran church services. This is part of the wonderful richness and variety which characterizes our dear Church, and part of the same evangelical freedom which makes it possible for Lutherans to have the most varied forms of church polity and worship and theology. But this multilingual character of our Church creates many problems in the realm of mutual understanding.

It is most essential for us to know what our brethren in the other Lutheran Churches of the world are thinking and studying and accomplishing, and for them to learn something about our thinking and living. The amount and the quality of theological literature produced in Germany is positively astounding; moreover, most of it is quite evangelical and biblical. During the first years after the war I met literally hundreds of men who had a manuscript under their arm or in their brief case and whose supreme problem was where to obtain paper for printing their book; I remember a theological professor clad in a sporty looking wool shirt, a pair of tennis shoes, and a pair of trousers held in place with a rope, asking not for potatoes or coffee or tobacco but for paper for his 1000-page manuscript. It would be difficult to single out one particular branch of theological science in present-day theological production in Germany; in every field there are publications of high rank and lasting merit. With reference to exegesis I need only mention Kittel's New Testament Dictionary which will soon be completed, a most unique and indispensable tool for all serious study of the New Testament, and



the name of Professor Bultmann whose theories and questions have called forth a veritable library of intense studies. In the field of church history it is still Martin Luther whose life and work engages many front rank theologians, but I noted many recent studies in Patristics—it would be shameful indeed if this branch were entirely surrendered to Roman Catholicism—and on the Orthodox Church where we need to revise a great number of commonly held opinions. A particularly live field is systematic theology where Karl Barth's magnificent *Kirchliche Dogmatik* continues to evoke replies and attacks and defenses and where the long "church struggle" has led to careful and intense studies of the foundation of the Church and the content of its message. Practical theology, formerly perhaps a stepchild, is being given its rightful place in the curriculum, an indication that the university faculties of theology are beginning to re-think their responsibility toward the Church. The field of Christian education is being cultivated with special care, and in many sections of Germany, especially in the East Zone, the ancient office of teacher or "catechist" is being restored, in part as a reply to the state's effort to stamp out Christian faith and life. As far as church music is concerned, one may well speak of a reformation such as has not blessed the Church since the days of Johann Sebastian Bach. To mention just one more, but possibly the most significant, activity I should like to point to the new type of evangelism inaugurated by the *Evangelischer Kirchentag* under the leadership of Dr. Reinold von Thadden-Trieglaff and Pastor Heinrich Giesen where thousands upon thousands of people are being reached and taught in the Gospel and often deeply inspired, perhaps the most promising method of bringing the message of salvation to modern mass-man.

Important and intensive work is done everywhere else in Europe. Swedish theologians have developed their own line of Luther research; unhampered by some of the presuppositions and prejudices current in Germany, they have made most valuable contributions both as far as Luther's life is concerned and also his theology. President Carlson of Gustavus Adolphus College has done a real service by acquainting English speaking students with this phase of European theology. The Lundensian school of systematic theology with first magnitude stars such as Aulen, Nygren, Bring, Wingren, deserves our deep attention, and there are also several voices at Uppsala which should not be ignored.

The Church of Norway has bravely endured some of the same hardships as the Church of Germany and has come out of the struggle

greatly unified and strengthened. Its best contribution may be in the clarification of the relation between church and state. Bishop Berggrav's remarkable address at the 1952 convention of the Lutheran World Federation has provoked a general discussion throughout the theological world which may lead us out of the dead-end street in this respect.

The Danish theologians, especially Professor Regin Preter of Aarhus, chairman of the Theological Commission of the Lutheran World Federation, are eagerly heard throughout Europe and America, and so are his Copenhagen colleagues.

Finland and its people and church have always been close to our hearts, but it is quite probable that this attachment was more or less sentimental. But when you become personally acquainted with the pastors and people of the Finnish Church your respect increases very greatly: here is a church that is aggressive and progressive and at the same time conservative in the best sense. Is it not astounding that the recurring revival movements in Finland are for the most part movements within the Church and in no sense sectarian as practically everywhere else?

But not only the large and powerful folk churches or national churches are doing important work, practical as well as theoretical; the same may be said of the small minority churches in Holland, France, England, or Austria.

Can we Lutherans in America under any circumstances really afford to ignore what our brethren throughout the world are thinking and doing? European Lutherans have begun to absorb our ideas on evangelism and stewardship and lay activity within the Church; they are beginning to make real progress in the direction of stimulating the rank and file of the church's membership to happy and blessed church work. Do we now assert that our work has been well done and that we have nothing to learn from our brethren?

For our own good and for the good of the other churches in the world, we need to exchange ideas and plans. No church is perfect. Each and every church needs stimulation. Is there anything so wicked and useless as a church that is self-satisfied and proud, that claims that it has and possesses and controls the truth, that thinks itself secure? We would have read church history falsely if we had failed to notice that pride cometh before the fall, that churches which are pleased with themselves and think that all problems have been solved and are unwilling to learn from their brethren, are dangerously close to their downfall and eventual death. That all is quiet is no proof that all is well; quietness may be the rest and peace of



the cemetery; unrest and questioning and debate and discussion is wholesome and may be necessary.

We must share with one another in order to overcome an ever threatening danger that besets us particularly here in America, viz., isolationism. It is true, of course, that there is a justified kind of isolationism; Hermann Sasse points out that the Lutheran Confessions were saved by the rigid isolationism of American Lutherans in the early nineteenth century; he declares that but for the staunch confessionalism of American Lutherans the Lutheran Confessions would have been swept away by the rising tide of liberalism and indifferentism. But there is a very deadly form of isolationism which we should seek by all means to avoid. For it is possible for a church to isolate itself from the problems which agitate Christendom; to act as though these problems did not exist, as though we did not have to face them; to stand by inactively while the battle is being fought somewhere else and to suppose that we may appropriate the fruits of victory without having stood our ground in the battle; to judge and to condemn without really having faced the issues squarely and honestly.

All these considerations underline the necessity of translating our brethren's theology.

Lack of time prevents a discussion at this moment of the various ways in which this very necessary task may be accomplished. Allow me merely to say that the creation of the Department of Theology in the Lutheran World Federation alone will not solve this problem, but that the cooperation of every scholar and student may be required. I visualize a well organized busy army of Lutheran men and women all over the world working with and for one another and sharing with one another the results of their studies, all for the benefit of our Church and in the Name of Christ our Savior.

#### IV

Before concluding I must, however, direct your attention to one ever present danger which attends translated theologies, to which we American Lutherans have at times succumbed and which will spell ruin and death for our American church life. I refer to the act or process of simply transplanting, or attempting to transplant, a theology from one country to another, from one continent to another.

In the first place, we have our own problems which no foreign theology can solve for us, problems not only in the realm of social

ethics and practical theology, problems arising from our mode of living and our standard of living, our mobility, our mechanization of life, our long hours of leisure, our public school system; but also important problems in the more theoretical realms of theology, for instance all the questions which rise from our denominationalism, our fidelity to the Lutheran Confessions, our cooperation with other Lutheran groups and other Protestant Churches, our relation to nation and government—all of them problems which European theologies cannot possibly solve for us. Importing European books or translating them will not bring us one step nearer to the solution of any of these burning issues.

Moreover, there is at least one point in theology which today can be properly developed only by Lutherans in America, namely a theology of the congregation, of the local parish. In Europe traditions and prejudices prevent the proper kind of development of this important phase of systematic theology. In America the local congregation comes closer to the ideas which Martin Luther had in mind than anywhere else except perhaps in the young churches in the mission field. European Lutherans, I feel, are anxiously waiting for a genuinely Lutheran theology of the Church written by an American Lutheran theologian. Our brethren need precisely this theological labor, and we owe them this brotherly service now, in view of the imminent changes in church life and state-church relations.

Secondly, the importation and transplantation of continental theologies will push us back into the ghetto of isolationism from which we have been emerging by the grace of God. The stream of American life will rush past us while we are attempting to adjust our church life to European ideas.

Third, the view that we American Lutherans are so busy doing things that we have no time for theological work of our own and that it is therefore cheaper to import theologies from elsewhere, is particularly reprehensible, and is easily discredited by the history of the Christian Church. There is no substitute for an indigenous theology. Transplanted theologies tend to remain static, like the vocabularies of emigrants; they show no development and no improvement.

Fourth, a church that fails to develop its own theology, anew in each age and anew under the shifting conditions of life, is stale and fruitless; it may continue for a while in this condition of stagnation, but its deserved demise is near. This is true even if the theology imported were the most genuinely Lutheran and most truly orthodox of all orthodox Lutheran theologies, even



if it were the whole unabridged Lutheran dogmatics of the seventeenth century. We may whole-heartedly admire this theology and praise the industry, logic, devotion and Bible-insight of the fathers, but we should not be blind to their one-sidedness, their lack of historical perspective, their dependence upon Aristotelianism, their narrowness. Nor should we forget that within one generation the whole system of scholastic orthodoxism was swept away and was replaced by rationalism and pietism. Is it entirely unthinkable that such a change may be repeated, especially when such orthodoxy is more or less of the foreign, imported, transplanted kind?

Fifth, merely transplanting European theology to America, even if the intention prevails to safeguard the Lutheran Confessions, is quite unevangelical. Spiritual possessions cannot be handed down like an inheritance, like a piece of property, from one generation to another or from one country to another. The Lutheran heritage is no inheritance. The possession of our heritage is contingent upon a price that we must pay. Each generation, each church, each individual must earn it in order to possess it. The great decisions of the sixteenth century, or the decisions of our fathers who for the sake of faith emigrated to this country, in protest against unionism or against state-control over the church, or the struggle of our brethren against totalitarianism today mean nothing to us unless we here today appropriate them anew in true personal faith. If the rationalist theology of fifty years ago has disappeared or almost disappeared, dare we simply accept the verdict of history as though it were unnecessary to know the issues involved and as though we were disinterested spectators sitting in the grandstand? No, if we wish to preserve our precious Lutheran heritage we need more than translated and transplanted theology. We need an indigenous American Lutheran theology.

*The art of interpreting is by no means given to everybody, as the crazy saints believe. It demands a true, pious, loyal, diligent, reverent, Christian, learned, experienced, and clever heart. I am therefore fully convinced that no false Christian nor any sectarian could ever translate faithfully.*

LUTHER, EPISTLE ON INTERPRETING, 1530

GUSTAF WINGREN

## Eschatological Hope and Social Action

The Tension between European and American Theology

### The Two View Points

It is always difficult to capture in brief formulas the general direction of thought in a particular field as these trends appear, for instance, in an entire country or an entire continent. It is possible to determine the general characteristics of American theology on the one hand, and European theology on the other, only if one limits oneself consciously to leading interests on both sides. If one resorts to such a limitation there is sufficient reason to say that Europe (Continental Europe) lays the main accent on eschatology and on faith and hope, whereas America (the USA) lays the emphasis on ethics and on social action. At any rate, this difference between American and European thinking appeared very clearly at the meetings of the Advisory Commission in 1951—53.

Those who listened to the contributions of the American theologians could very soon single out certain basic features which recurred time and again in the discussions. First of all, the interest of the Americans was always directed towards the social conditions. Insofar as one looked ahead it was always a question of the immediate surveyable future, the very question being whether the Church (the Christian individuals) would be able, through its (their) actions today, to contribute to the shaping of this immediate future. Our responsibility in world history prompts us to act now in this world but the fact that we act now does not mean that we want to put our activity into the plan of God's acting or that we wish to seize the throne belonging only to Christ. For God acts now, Christ rules now, through those who believe in Him and obey Him. At this point the American theologians occasionally levelled some criticism against the European "over-emphasis" of eschatology, which according to their opinion threatened to make the present time a time when God's power is somewhat on the decline, leaving us alone with our human efforts, and transferring Christ's power only to a point far from us and far from today's world. In the opinion of the Americans, the Christian effort of today is wholly founded on the knowledge that Christ rules now, is with us, and guides us into the future. They too



wanted to say that Christ is the only hope for the Church and for the world, but just as we have this hope and this faith we can undauntedly invest our strength in the task that the present time demands from us.

The European theologians laid the emphasis on quite different points. The American point of view seemed to them to contain a risk of derailment as to evolutionary optimism and progressivism. To invest our hope in Christ in such a way would be the same as placing hope in man, in oneself. One relates man with the deeds of God in a way, suggesting that man would not resist God's work. Human efforts and contributions in today's world would then continuously grow into the good future for which one hopes. Just as an outcome of this theological tendency does the word about the return of Christ—in the opinion of the Europeans—leave the Americans so relatively cool, as the return of Christ means that the deed of God breaks into our activities and work as something completely new and as a judgment of ourselves. Consequently, the Europeans made the New Testament's teaching about Christ's *Parousia* a decisive point in the debate. He who rejects the clear word of the New Testament in this matter thereby proves that Christ is not his only hope, but that in addition, he trusts in human efforts. On the other hand, the Europeans did not mean that the social activities of the Church should be eliminated. What must be eliminated is the idea that there is an organic continuity between our deeds now and the breaking in of Christ's Kingdom. Our deeds can bear witness to this coming Kingdom, that is to say, they can refer to the coming Kingdom. He who renders witness refers to something which is outside and beyond himself. Just as much as words, deeds may render witness but the deeds which bring testimonies to Christ do not with any continuity glide over into that they testify. When this "other future" comes, it comes as something entirely new. There is a discontinuity between the actions and works of human beings and the arrival and return of Christ. Everything human is liable to judgment and cannot be characterized simply as an incomplete beginning which will grow into consummation.

### **The Right Relationship of Love and Hope**

It seems to be necessary to criticize both these contradictory concepts existing here.

As regards the American position, it is immediately clear that the unanimous testimony of the New Testament refuses it. The thought of Christ's return for judgment is central in the New Testament writings. As far as the interest in Christian social action and the hope for improvements in the surveyable future which we are to meet and which

is to be moulded by our own works—as far as this interest is permitted to put aside the hope for Christ's return, we obviously find ourselves on a line leading away from the central meaning of the sentence: Christ is the only hope. It is a bad argument to refer to the misuse of Bible words about the last days, which one finds in certain primitive, fundamentalist sects. If one were to give up essential aspects of the message of the New Testament only because these are being misused, one would thus simply hand over the text of the Bible to such an abuse as well as abstain from interpretation of the text. This argument (to refer to the sects) does not seem to be the main reason for the deprecatory attitude sometimes assumed by American theologians against the European concept on the return of Christ. The main reason seems to be the negative resulting from the eschatological attitude of the Europeans in relation to the question of the social action of the Church. If the strong accentuation of eschatology could be freed from such negativism in regard to the thought of God's and Christ's power in our time, then it seems that the Americans would be willing to be criticised themselves. If it is inaccurate and inadequate to let the interest in social work put aside the hope of Christ's return—as the Americans tend to do—then it must also be incorrect and insufficient to let the eschatological hope displace the interest in improved conditions of life for the people of our time. The ethical demand on us in this respect is also a central tenet in the New Testament, as well as the knowledge that he who accepts this demand fulfills the will of God here at the present time thus being entitled to rejoice in the fact that he is permitted to be a servant whom his Lord uses.

At this point many Americans surely have a decisive reason for dissatisfaction with the European emphasis on eschatology. One seriously ought to ask the question whether there is something fundamentally wrong with the basic customary eschatological attitude in Europe and whether it may not be this particular attitude contributing to the fact that European criticism of America so often becomes purely negative and rarely positive and helpful. We have now arrived at the more difficult question: the criticism of the European position. This criticism can be centred around one single problem: does the concept of "witness" cover the full meaning of the New Testament's view on the works or on the love of neighbour? Is not God, (Christ, the Spirit) the active subject in works accomplished by faith? And is it not so that in this way the last days will be the end of a series of deeds which God is already performing now?

According to Paul's view, "The Fruit of the Spirit" is not isolated from relations to neighbours. On the contrary, it is something which



belongs to this earth of ours. "The fruit of the Spirit" on this earth is contrasted with "the works of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16—26). The main consideration about the "fruit" is not that it refers to the Spirit. The main consideration is a causal one: the Spirit is an active force which prompts action. The word about "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6) describes perhaps best the relation between faith and love. Therefore, God's love is the subject in a Christian person's love for his neighbour. God acts through us "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). The person working in God's service can say about his work, that "the love of Christ constraineth us" (II. Cor. 5:14). If we force a wedge between God and man in such a manner that the human deeds are invested in the exclusive task of witnessing about and referring to God, certain essential points in the message of the New Testament get lost. Naturally, the thought of deeds referring to God is also from the New Testament: good fruit testifies to the fact that the tree is a good one—bad fruit to the fact that the tree is a bad one. But this is not the only point of view. It is not even the most central one, and above all, it is not a view that is unique to the New Testament. The unique aspect pervading the New Testament is the thought of man as a new creation, and this thought is organically linked with faith in God as active now, as acting in our midst now, through Christ and the Spirit.

Another point is linked up with this. When the last days come, an enemy will be cast down, "that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 20:2). Up to that time this foe has thus been in existence. The task of Jesus is to struggle against him (Acts 10:38). The purpose of Christ's coming into the world is described as a mission whereby Christ would destroy the work of the Devil (I. John 3:8, Hebrews 2:14). It is obvious that this task will not be completed before the last day or at the Parousia of Christ—then the enemy will be cast down.

The Christian Church may look forward to this with confidence (Romans 16:20), for Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God. He is in power and His rule will not cease until all enemies are under His feet. To us the assumption may be close at hand, that if Christ rules there is no power which opposes Him, but in the New Testament the situation is nearly the opposite: To rule and govern means to rule and govern against a disturbing power. We find there the old concept of the king as a restorer who has to wage a battle. Therefore it is said about Christ that "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (I. Cor. 15:25). It is therefore on this ground that Jesus, when driving out evil spirits, said two completely different things: 1. that the Kingdom of Satan is in existence and that it has not been annihilated

(Matthew 12:26); and 2. that the Kingdom of God has come, evidenced by the fact that the evil spirits are now being cast out by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28). At this very moment the power of Satan still exists, but it is on the way to disintegration, and just in this process Christ's rule is active. But at the Parousia of Christ, the power of Satan will be completely annihilated. Then there will be no death, no sin, no sorrow, only praise.

If we thus regard the relation between the present time and the return of Christ from this point of view, we can say that the return of Christ is the end of a series of deeds which Christ is already doing now. It is not simply so that today's world is filled only with human deeds, and the last day with divine deeds. The present is a time filled with the deeds of the living God, yet there are deeds left for God to do, deeds that He has not yet carried out. Christ is King already now, a King governing with power, that is to say, battling against His enemies. Then, in the ultimate time, He will have carried out His ultimate victorious deed: the enemies will be cast down. Now we have the spirit as birthright gift, active in faith, prayer and love. Then the spirit will revive also our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11). Always when facing such a series of deeds we are right in maintaining that that which is now, bears testimony to that which will come; the reference towards the future marks the present. But this is not the only point of view. It is equally correct to maintain that the present is the beginning and the return of Christ the consummation. These two points of view do not exclude each other. When they exclude each other, both of them are understood in a way alien to the New Testament. When we come down to the essence of the New Testament, both points of view prove to be parts of a great inclusive line of thought. That is something which has not been developed by the prevalent European eschatology with sufficient clarity. Therefore the critique of the American position becomes purely negative and lacking in clear guidance. Fruitful results in the debate between American and European thought, which has now begun in the Advisory Commission, cannot be arrived at unless we make energetic efforts to find the mistake also in the European position, and sharply criticize this mistake.

### **The Necessary Unity of Word and Action**

After this more critical survey of the American attitude and the European one, we now proceed to some general positive theses, with the intention of outlining somewhat more clearly the third road leading



out of the present unfruitful contradiction between American and European theology.

First, one should ascribe decisive importance to the fact that the deed of Jesus is a double one: to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick. It is unnecessary at this point to give special reference to passages of the Gospel. Every exegetic manual invariably states the same thesis. When sending out the twelve and the seventy-two disciples, Jesus gives them the same double task which He Himself has taken upon Him: to preach and to heal the sick (Luke 9:2, and 10:9). The matter is well-known. But when the systematists deal with the New Testament, they often talk as though the deeds had no place at all in the context. The entire emphasis is laid upon the word and upon the preaching of the word. At the points where the systematics nevertheless speak of deeds or, in general, of Christian action in the world, they let the preaching dominate even the same; the deed "testifies", that is, the deed speaks about something, it informs about something. It would be more correct and adequate if one did it the other way around and looked at the word under the aspect of the deed. For this is the characteristic feature of the word of the Bible, both in the Old and the New Testament; the word is a creative deed, establishing that which it announces. It is therefore of great importance to remember that God created the world with His word of power. Consequently this thought is of basic validity in the New Testament: that the Gospel creates new life. However, the general rule must be to hold on to the double aspect of it all: speaking and healing, preaching and acting. Neither of these two elements can be omitted. If we clearly realize that inter-related duality, we can consider the miracles of Jesus from the angle of His Gospel preaching, and conversely, regard His Gospel preaching from the angle of His healing ministry. The miracles are included in the preaching, for the miracles mean that the power of Satan is being broken, and that the Kingdom of God is coming; and the preaching is integrated with the miracles, for the forgiveness of sins is also a miracle. It is only important that one does not start out one-sidedly from the word and the preaching of the word, forgetting that the miracles and deeds belong to the word in inter-related duality. Through such oneness the entire New Testament becomes intellectualized.

Concerning the miracles of healing, it must further be insistently maintained that all the miracles of Jesus are fundamentally rooted in the love of the neighbour. They have a meaning of their own in the earthly context where they are carried out, namely, the intention of helping suffering people. It is illuminating to look at the miracle stories of the Gospels from this angle thus getting a concrete picture of how



"social" these deeds are. They are expressions of power in which the approaching Kingdom of God appears and in which an enemy of God is conquered. They are therefore also testimonies of the position of Jesus as Messiah. It is quite right to claim that they "bear witness" but Jesus rejects it as a devilish temptation—without thereby helping a human being—personally to claim the power of God (Matthew 4:1—12, and 27:42. Compare 26:53). Of course, this entire direction of the miracles towards the needs of others can be looked upon as part of their witnessing task. A miracle as a pure manifestation of power, without love for the neighbour, would not be a witness to the God Who speaks in the Gospel, but rather to a demon, an idol, a devil, only intent on safeguarding his own power. The essence of God is to give. In this way He has revealed Himself in Christ. But it is very difficult to keep the witness about this God pure and unadulterated if one isolates the preaching of the word from the earthly deeds through which needy people can be helped.

Such helpful deeds must be done by the Church of our time wherever there is a human need which we have any possibility to relieve; otherwise all talk about the Church as representing Christ is false talk.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the healing done by Jesus brought health to the people but this health was not a lasting one. It would be superfluous to point this out did we not frequently come across a reasoning which rejects any idea of a social contribution by the Church with the argument that the Church has to do with eternal life and not with transitory and peripheral things, such as bodily ailments and the healing of them. This is to make the Church more spiritual than is her Lord. Although His coming meant God's definite action for the world He is daily carrying out this work of succour to individuals, through individual care. He was often busy from morning to evening giving a period of health to humans and yet these humans were finally to die. This was partly the stumbling block during all His ministry, just as unacceptable as the Gospel offered to publicans and sinners—but basically an expression of the same divine love as the Gospel.

"The blind receive sight, and the lame walk. The lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them, and blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me" (Matthew 11:5—6). Here again we face the dual aspect: deed and preaching. It is important clearly to see the relation between Jesus' deed and the deeds of the Church at this point. Also the deeds of the Church in the service of neighbourly love are necessarily carried by the knowledge that the Church is only patching and repairing something which will in any event soon fall to pieces. And yet the patching



and repair work must be done—for that is the way love approaches fellow beings.

However, the very fact that the arguments in favour of the Church's concentration on the eternal life are being kept alive to such a great extent, probably has its origin in certain theses from the Reformation era, theses which are in themselves quite true. In the 16th century a division was often made between "the spiritual realm" and "the worldly realm" and this in such a way that the spiritual realm was conceived as something which dealt with eternal life; the worldly realm, on the other hand, as something which dealt with earthly life, with the "body". It should be noticed, however, that "spiritual realm" does not refer to a sociological entity, a group of persons. The expression, spiritual realm, indicates God's way of propagating His word. God is doing this through the office of preaching. "The worldly realm" is in the same manner an expression for God's way of acting namely for the bodily needs of maintaining external order, etc. God does this through all worldly offices. But the person holding, for instance, a worldly office, is also baptized and belongs to God's people. He is a member of the Church just as much as the preacher, the only difference is that he does not hold the office of a preacher. He, too, is used by God, not to propagate the Gospel through preaching, and in this way to open the gate into eternal life, but to be responsible in his particular station for the care of his neighbour through deeds which maintain the life of the body. One could say that the worldly professions and stations during the Reformation era belonged to the life of the Church: they have the same function as the diaconate in the Primitive Church. People at that time did not, in contradistinction to people of our time, have any feeling of a difference between an ecclesiastical and a bourgeois-secular community. Life in a community was fundamentally the same as living in the Christian parish, the clergyman had the sole responsibility as a minister of the Word, but the opinion was never held that the clergy was the same as the Church. All who lived by the Baptism, the Word and the Holy Communion belonged to the Church.

This unity between spiritual and worldly concerns is now broken. The "deeds" represented through the laity have pulled off in a different direction and become "the State", the new social welfare state. The Church is now looked upon as a group within this state. If in this new situation one repeats the statements of the reformers about the "spiritual realm" as tantamount to "the word" and as concerned solely with "eternal life", one will only split the concept of the New Testament of the Church and hopelessly intellectualize it. For the duality word-deed in the preaching of Jesus continues in the kerygma-dia-

conate of the Primitive Church and exactly the same duality is carried over into the Reformation era and its spiritual realm—worldly realm. If we lay the whole emphasis on “the word” and reject the idea of the social action of the Church, we sever an original link between word and deed. In our day, the Church, in order to remain a New Testament Church, must think through anew the question of active laymen participation in the life of the Church, and then draw the practical conclusions as regards the organisation of the Church. It is not improbable that one or two points in the position of Americans can be of guiding influence in this respect. From the beginning, the people of America have been fortunate in not having a State Church. The situation which is slowly developing in Europe through negative measures (the dissolution of State-Church ties) is a situation which existed from the beginning in America as a self-evident starting point for a positive work of reconstruction.

The relation between word and deed is of the greatest importance for a positive solution of the present contradictory views within the Advisory Commission. The social interest receives its natural place within the frame given through the faith in the lordship of Christ, yet “the deed” will not remove faith and hope from their rightful place. The entire field of social action should be seen in the perspective of struggle, carried out against an enemy bent on the destruction of society.

And yet, those deeds done in the sign of the struggle on this earth can never undo, never “cast down” the enemy: all social work is a patching of something which, after all, will eventually die. Only in connection with the Parousia of Christ will the devil be cast down, whose work of destruction is evidenced by bad social conditions and who must be fought, however negligible the success, in the same manner as Jesus quietly helped each individual among the sick whom He met, without being discouraged by the thought of all those He did not reach. But right through all these efforts for the alleviation of earthly and bodily pains, the Gospel must also be proclaimed about the Kingdom that cannot tremble. It is the hope of the return of Christ which encompasses and supports all work and all action.

### **Human Endeavour, the Cross and the Resurrection**

But this trend of thought has one risk in its wake, and in conclusion we shall have to say something about that risk. The risk is that social work today and Christ's return in the future are conceived as parts of a continuing process and that our endeavours and our actions would



thus in a continuing, organic way move over into the ultimate events; one thing would glide over into the other without ruptures. This would not be in accordance with the message of the New Testament on such matters.

This risk, however, will not be neutralized by reducing the significance of the action to a mere "sign". Then one would bring in discontinuity in such a way that—as was pointed out above—a number of absolutely essential thoughts of the New Testament are torn apart. The primitive Christian Kerygma about Christ is centered around Christ's death and resurrection. The central point is not incarnation in itself. If the incarnation is placed in the centre, one comes close to using the contrasting realities, divinity—humanity, in a manner which leads away from the christological view of the New Testament. If, on the other hand, Christ's death and resurrection are permitted to retain their central place, the unfruitful contrasts disappear: it becomes possible to think in terms of real relation between social work on the earth and eschatological consummation and yet there is in the midst of this relation a definite discontinuity genuine of the nature of the New Testament. Just for the Assembly in 1954, which will speak about the Crucified and Risen Lord as the only hope for the world, it should be an urgent concern to think carefully what the fact means, that the centre of the New Testament's christology is death and resurrection and nothing else. There will perhaps be an opportunity during the preparatory work now going on, to treat this subject at greater length, the relevance of which has hardly been fully realized in relation to the questions which have so far been discussed in the Advisory Commission. Here I should like only to make some very brief comments.

In the first place, the New Testament quite clearly indicates that the future will not harmoniously grow into the realm of Christ. The time facing the Christian Church is rather a time of temporary deterioration: apostasy, persecution, war, catastrophes, the appearance of Anti-Christ. And this is the way to the arrival and victory of Christ. Precisely in the midst of deterioration there is a place for hope. The basis for this hope lies in the last analysis of the fact that the tribulations through which the Church has to pass have already been borne by the Lord of the Church who was crucified on this earth and therefore by his resurrection went on to victory. Without the cross, no resurrection. Without death, no life.

Secondly, the whole question of this death is related to something we have already mentioned in this paper. We saw that social work is really a patching-up of something which must break in the end, and that when justifying activities in the social realm, we must always reckon

with this fundamentally "resultless" endeavour. Our social endeavours are "resultless" only if one insists on applying a gigantic perspective of world improvement. But we have not been asked to apply such a perspective of world improvement. It is not employed in one single passage in the New Testament. But there is in fact a commandment in the New Testament often reiterated: the commandment to love one's neighbour. To love the neighbour is never without result; I can always reach the neighbour—this is inherent in the very notion. We are asked to love our neighbour. Behind the neighbour there is not a continually, organically improving world, only the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31 ff). To consecrate one's life to such neighbourly love is the same as being willing to enter death but with a hope of resurrection. If we think through carefully the very meaning of the term "neighbour" we are placed before a "no" to the perspective of world improvement. At the same time we find that there is a relation between our actions today and the hope of Christ's coming. But the relation is a relation which cuts right through discontinuity. The discontinuity makes it necessary to speak of hope, one cannot see how one's actions lead over into the Kingdom of God. One only knows of the commandment to work and act, deriving strength from hope. In such a case, the most earthly thing, that which is seemingly farthest away from heaven, is closest to the "neighbour" and therefore, by and through hope, closest to heaven. In the same way death is closest to resurrection.

Thirdly, death in this context is related to something else also already indicated above. The entire social action of the Christian Church is made in a world where "the enemy" is still living, and our social action is carried out against him, as an expression of the struggle against him. Fundamentally, this naturally means a relation. Now the Devil is being fought. On the last day he will be completely dethroned, cast down. Therefore, the ultimate events are the last sequel in a series of deeds done by God, a series of divine actions which are going on here and now. But it is important clearly to see how at the same time a discontinuity is presupposed. A discontinuity closely allied to the fact that our way as followers of Christ is a way through death to life.

Two points are of particular importance here. Evil is a power which cannot be undone through social measures. As soon as an external improvement has been brought about in a particular field, this improvement causes new social misery. For every change in any direction means new possibilities for human egoism to find hitherto unused roads to safeguard self-interest at the expense of the good of the neighbour. He who really works for the good of the neighbour (and thus not only works for the realization of a certain political idea) will encounter a



permanent head wind. He consecrates his life to a struggle without prospect of victory in this age, a struggle which will on the contrary end in darkness. The "deeds" on the earth before the arrival of Christ are in a certain sense wasted deeds, and must be wasted deeds.

The second point is more important. The "enemy" of whom we speak here is, of course, sin, nothing but sin, and sin rules not only in the world, within people who have no Christian faith. Sin is also a power within ourselves, albeit a power which will be "crucified and killed" according to the will of God. The entire field on which the social struggle is being carried out belongs to this present aeon, which is the aeon of death, in anticipation of the resurrection. If our work on this earth is a work against a permanent head wind as we have said before, whereby we steadily receive a set-back, this resistance is also directed against sin, levelled at the "enemy", for also within us as unredeemed creatures is a strong hold for the evil power which must die if the resurrection can take place. This "death" has never been so clearly comprehended in the history of the Church as during the Reformation era. Luther, in his teaching on "Beruf-vocatio", stresses the fact that the work in a vocation is cross-bearing work: this takes place on this earth according to by Jesus' words to "take one's cross" and to follow him, when we carry out the duties placed upon us by our work or office and when we accept in faith that which happens to us in fulfilling these duties. A strange connection between christocentric faith and closeness to the world was an outcome of this attitude. In the midst of earthly work one lived "in Christ", for being in death and accepting this death by faith, means the same as being on the way between crucifixion and resurrection. Modern society offers just as excellent a starting point for such thinking based on the New Testament as society did four hundred years ago.

Whatever systematic theological procedure one prefers at this point, it is of greatest importance that basic biblical contexts should not be overlooked. In this case, i. e. the conflict between American and European thinking in the Advisory Commission, it is obvious that several seemingly irreconcilable contrasts can be dissolved provided that the New Testament may be permitted to criticize both America and Europe.

*Non aliter, quam dum Deus occidit, fides vitae in morte exercetur.*

LUTHER, DE SERVO ARBITRIO, 1525

REGIN PRENTER

## Jesus Christ — the Hope of the World

The theme chosen for the second assembly of the World Council of Churches includes one striking feature: it defines the hope in Jesus Christ proclaimed by the Church as the hope of the world. This leaves aside all questions regarding other possible hopes. May the individual Christian hope in Jesus Christ for such personal matters as a meeting with his loved ones who have departed this life? Or what of the hope of the Church, the congregation of believers, gathered around the Word and Sacrament, to see its Lord revealed triumphant and victorious over its enemies and persecutors who in this world triumph over it? Instead of all this it is Jesus Christ as the hope of the world who is to be confessed in Evanston, and not the hope of the individual isolated from the world, nor the hope of the church as over against the world.

### **Is this way of conceiving hope truly biblical?**

When we say that Jesus Christ is the hope of the world we must not forget that in the New Testament the term "world" has several meanings. On the one hand it designates God's creation "the heaven and earth and all that is therein" (Acts 17,24; Jn. 1,10; Lk. 11,50; Mtt. 24,21; Rom. 1,20). God loves the world that He has created and will save it (Jn. 3,16; 4,42; 8,12; 1. Jn. 2,21; 4,14; 2. Cor. 5,19; Rom. 11,15). On the other hand the "world" is the creation that has fallen away from God and is now closed and hostile to Him. It lies in wickedness (1. Jn. 5,19) and is subject to the rule of the prince or god of this world (Jn. 12,31; 14,30; 16,11; 2. Cor. 4,4). It does not believe in Jesus Christ (Jn. 7,7; 15,18) and hates and persecutes those that believe in Him (Jn. 15,18 ss; 17,14). That is why Christian believers must not love the world (1. Jn. 2,15; Jas. 4,4). It would be easy to find even more references. For the biblical view of the world is precisely this that the world is creation in its fallen, sinful state, in its sin struggling against God for autonomy, hostile to God and under judgment from Him.

In view of this it is easy to understand why the Bible prefers the expression "the heaven and the earth" when it speaks of the totality



of God's creatures that are subject to His rule. This means that the earth, man's dwelling place, does not shut itself off from God so as to be subject only to its own laws (*στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*) but that it remains open to the heavens. The heavens, too, are God's creation. But heaven and earth do not form a compact whole, the laws of which can be known by man and controlled by him. Instead, heaven remains above the earth and thus prevents man from making his "world" into a self-contained cosmic system. It is only when the Bible speaks of the fallen creation that struggles for its autonomy against God and His rule, that it prefers the term "world." This is true of the whole New Testament, but especially of St. Paul and St. John. In Greek usage, too, the word "kosmos" means the ordinance of things that unites heaven and earth, the gods and mankind under one law.

In this respect the theme of the Evanston Assembly is entirely biblical. Even the fallen creation is God's. God has reconciled it with Himself in Christ. He wants to save it by loving it to the point of giving His only Son for it. He sends His messengers into the world (Mtt. 26,13; 28,19 ss; Mc. 16,15; Acts 1,8). They proclaim Christ as the hope of the world. Their preaching would have missed its goal — and so would ours — if this universal perspective were lost and Christ were preached only as the hope of the individual or of a "church" that is sharply distinguished from the world.

However, the biblical view implies that the hope of the world is that it can look forward to its salvation from the rule of the wicked usurper. The world hopes that Christ will enable it to be no longer the "world" but instead to become again "the heaven and the earth." Thus the world must hope for its own and in the judgment of God and for its resurrection in the form of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2. Pet. 3,13; Acts 21,1).

This means that the biblical definition of Christ as the hope of the world makes us proclaim the end of the world in God's judgment. This judgment on the world has been proclaimed in Christ's death on the cross and will be revealed to all men when the crucified and risen Lord returns for the last judgment. In this judgment lies the hope of the world in so far as the world humbly receives it as true and accepts its salvation in Jesus Christ and the vicarious "satisfaction" (Augsburg Confession Art. 4) made by Him. The world does so by hearing and believing the Gospel. Hence the world that is saved in faith awaits its own end in the judgment of God at the return of Christ, is none other than the Church, the congregation of all believers. The other "world", that persecutes the Church and aims at preserving its independence from God, is without hope. It clings

desperately to the godless present and defends itself against the future that God has prepared for it i.e. its death as "the world" and its resurrection as a new earth below new heavens. The world without hope will defend itself against its only hope in Jesus Christ until the end. It will hope that the godless present may continue without interruption. Thus it uses a false hope — but one that exists in endless variations — as a defence against true hope. True hope includes judgment and the end of the world. In this way it is "eschatological". False hope, on the other hand, expects the godless present to continue also in the future without being limited by either judgment or end. It is therefore "historical" instead of "eschatological". For this reason the hopeless world is not a neutral sphere in which Christ can be proclaimed the hope of the world. The hopeless world will always show its hopelessness by setting up false hopes. When therefore Christ is truly proclaimed the hope of the world, within a world that has no hope and that is therefore full of false hopes, the very foundations of these false hopes will be exposed to attack from the true hope.

Here we have reached the decisive point of what is to be done in Evanston. It appears that the theme has been chosen in view of the historical situation of today. When we speak of the hope of the world we think not only of the world as defined in the Bible but also of the world as it presents itself to the consciousness of modern man. This world is the historical scene on which we live, to the future of which the nations look forward with apprehension, a world of enormous odds between the strong and the weak, of irreconcilable opposition between races, nations and classes that struggle for power. On top of all that the fabulous development of modern techniques enables the opponents to wage their war to the point of utter destruction. Where will the coming decades lead us?

In this situation the World Council of Churches will meet for the second time. What will the churches have to say? Will they be able to give hope to a world in despair? Or will they do no more than spend a fortnight debating fine points of dogma and church law? We shall have to realize how earnestly this question is being asked and approve it. Churchmen who do not feel the despair of the contemporary world as their own may prefer to discuss passionately the many details of internal church affairs instead of worrying about political, social and economic problems of the world. But they will not be able to render genuine testimony to the hope that is in Jesus Christ.

But do we see the temptation that lies in wait for us here? The despairing world would certainly like to receive new hope. But what



kind of hope is it really looking for? How far is our world also the "world" of which the Bible speaks? Are not all phases of its activity determined by the desire to exclude God from the life of man by using the tremendous power that modern man has obtained from the fabulous development of technics? Is it not consciously and formally so far secularized that only human efficiency and human will-power shall be allowed to shape its destinies? Technics are transforming our surroundings from nature into culture (or into civilization, which is less than culture). Our world is to be shaped in accordance with man, i.e. it is to be freed from all influences that are not human or that man cannot predict and determine. What kind of hope can this kind of world seek when it despairs momentarily — or for long — of the success of so tremendous an enterprise? Surely its hope must be secular, based on the desire to flee from God's judgment and from the end that the very despair of the world foreshadows. The world can possess nothing but secular hope until it has learned through faith in Christ to hope for its own end in God's judgment and for its resurrection as a new earth below new heavens. Until then it will seek for a hope that promises continuity of the present reality of this world, and of the present exclusion of God, without fear of destruction or end. Everyone who lives in this world and knows its longing, knows that our world longs for precisely that kind of hope. But this does not mean that the Church should or could meet that longing by trying to fulfil it with the help of the Gospel. If the Church is to proclaim Jesus Christ and only Him as the hope of the world, it must be ready to disappoint that kind of hope. The Church must not forget that the hope that the world is given in Jesus Christ is the very contrary of what the world desires. The world as such wishes to continue in its worldliness without let or hindrance or risk of the end or judgment. That is its future. Its hope is the expectation of just such a future, endless and free from judgement. But the Gospel promises the world a better hope, i.e. its own end as world and the creation of new heavens and a new earth. The object of this hope includes judgment on the worldliness of this world. That is why every proclamation of Christian hope is at the same time a radical attack on the hope of the world.

### **The double danger**

This creates a double danger for the Church that must today proclaim hope in Jesus Christ to the world. The primary danger is that the Church may secularize Christian hope by transforming hope

in Jesus Christ into the kind of hope of the world that we described above. That happens when Christianity is presented as a force that can somehow protect the world from the end and from the judgment that its worldliness will bring upon it. That would be the false hope of utopia in Christian garments. It might be characterized as chiliasm in the broadest sense of that term. The object of the world's hope is immanent in history. The world hopes to continue within history without end or judgment. Thus the hope of the world takes the form of an utopian dream. The idea is that one day men will at last be able to organize the world in such a way that neither end nor judgment can threaten them. Individuals will go on dying but they will be able to prepare a happy and sheltered existence for their successors and in comparison with that, individual immortality seems unimportant and hardly worth while.

### I. Chiliasm

When that dream of utopia takes on Christian disguise, it turns into chiliasm. The idea is that Christian faith will have such success in shaping history that — even before Christ appears for the last judgment — a perfect kingdom will be established here on earth with Jesus Christ as its earthly ruler and under the leadership of the Church or “the pious”. People may take this millenium more or less literally. Some may think of it in terms of a miraculous irruption into our world, others in terms of continuous Christian cultural development. But that makes little difference. The chief constant factor is the expectation of a terrestrial secular kingdom of God, that is to appear within the course of history, before the last judgment. Such an expectation secularizes Christian hope, by changing it into an inner-worldly hope. The object of hope is no longer Jesus Christ Himself, who by His judgment puts an end to the world's worldliness and creates a new earth under new heavens. Instead the object of hope is the Christianity of the Christians, which is creative within history and changes the world to such an extent that it escapes the end and the judgment. The 17th Article of the Augsburg Confession is therefore quite right\* in condemning “those who now spread Jewish doctrines, saying that before the resurrection of the dead the pious shall rule the earth and shall destroy all the ungodly.” In the 20th century, too, we are genuinely tempted to secularize Christian hope. It is a very “subtle” form of chiliasm that tempts us and its utopian side is hardly apparent. The idea of a last judgment

\* That is true also of the exegesis of the obscure verses Apoc. 20, 1—10. In any case they speak of a first resurrection and not of a period within the world's history.



is today largely regarded as a phantastic “mythological” speculation that loses all relevance as soon as we adopt the modern view of the world. Hence Christian eschatology must be taken into the course of history and any future, for which we hope must be within history. There are two possibilities of doing this. Either we shall, with the theologians who are influenced by existentialism, identify the future of God with the moment of decision that comes to us again and again through the preaching of the Word. Or we shall join the older liberal theology, which contained strong elements of utopia, in viewing the future as historical progress, i.e. as the constant betterment of human culture under the influence of Christianity. But whichever way we chose, the result will ultimately be the same. The emphasis will be on human history and the object of hope will no longer be Christ who comes at the end of history but the Christians’ decision of faith or cultural achievements within history.

Thus the object of hope would not be the Christ in whom we have faith but the faith of the Christians. That remains true even if we add that faith — whether in the shape of a decision or of the cultural achievement of Christian ethics — is made possible only through the presence of the living Christ in the kerygma of the Church or the Christian ethos. For there remains an essential difference between the two kinds of faith involved. One kind is thought of as a form of human existence made possible by the kerygma of Christ, i.e. as man’s faith. For the other it is essential that we turn away from our own decision and look only to the decision that Christ makes for us. Genuine biblical faith is not merely based upon the kerygma as upon a cause or occasion. It receives the sole and entire contents of the kerygma, the message of what Christ has done for man and in his place, of Christ’s decision for him, which once and for all times turns man’s interest radically away from himself towards Christ. The same essential difference exists after all also between two other forms of faith: the reality of one lies entirely in its influence on human culture. The reality of the other is based on the fact that God promises what true faith believes. We do not mean to deny that true faith also involves a decision on the believer’s part, nor that it must influence men’s lives. But we do mean to say that it is essential to faith to know nothing of the believer’s decision or of its own influence. The only interest of faith must be to hear the Word of God, through which it receives the vicarious satisfaction (Augsburg Confession Art. 4) of Jesus Christ. As a result of the modern tendency to dissolve and spiritualize all genuine eschatology, the accent of theology has shifted from the contents of the Christian faith to the

form of faith as such. Instead of asking what we are to believe, we ask how we believe it. Consequently the Church of our days is particularly tempted by that form of "chiliasmus subtilissimus" that consists in the secularization of Christian hope. For even if the "future" is not thought of as a miraculous end to history but "merely" as the decision that faith must make, this implies a subtle form of chiliasm. Those who believe in it no longer hope for the coming of Christ but merely for a repetition of the kerygma. Beyond the Church that proclaims its message there is — nothing.

But what can we do to make the message of Christian hope relevant for our contemporaries without secularizing it? Will not those of them who are oppressed by fear and by the danger of our historical situation, merely shake their heads if we tell them about Christ's return to judgment, the resurrection of the body, the new heavens and the new earth? Most likely they will quite simply not understand what we say, for the words we shall use have no real meaning to them. At the most they will think of these things as the phantastic myths of a by-gone age. If on the other hand, we abandon genuine eschatology in order to make the Gospel relevant to modern thinking, we shall have to secularize true Christian hope.

Another factor that tempts the Church of our time to secularize its hope is the strong tendency to theocratic thinking that is evident today in many kinds of theology, even in some that are highly "orthodox". This tendency is connected with the deep-rooted spiritualism that we have inherited from the great traditions of Pietism and Rationalism. It prevents us from taking the law as seriously as we should. The law no longer — as e.g. Luther very well knew — makes demands upon our daily life here on earth, through the laws of our profession and estate. It is no longer a set of concrete commandments that express the will of God and demand of us that we love our Creator and our fellow-creatures. It no longer both holds the old man in check and drives him to justify himself by good works. Instead, the law is more and more widely conceived of nowadays as an ideal that we should strive to attain in order to become fully fledged personalities that can stand up to nature. The more the law is spiritualized into an ideal, the more it ceases to be a concrete, terrestrial commandment, but is filled with new content from the Gospel, and the ideal of love becomes the model for humanity. Whenever the law is mistaken for an ideal and the ideal is seen in the Christ of the Gospel, then the law is ultimately deduced from the Gospel. But then the Gospel ceases to be good news of the vicarious accomplishment of the law by Jesus Christ the Son of God. It is chang-



ed into the new law of Christian ethics. And this leads into the very heart of the theocratic way of thinking. It is no longer possible to imagine ethics that are independent of the Gospel, an "usus civilis" of the law. The law cannot precede the Gospel but must follow it, since it is a result of the Gospel, a law of Christian ethics. As a result, the law no longer demands of us that we accomplish in faith the duties that the existing ordinances and estates impose upon us. What it now does is to replace unsatisfactory "pagan" or "merely human" ethics by higher "Christian" ethics that can be deduced from the Gospel. Our duty is no longer to live a Christian life i.e. a life of obedience in faith, which is the only genuinely Christian factor in a world that can never ultimately be Christian but is merely legal. Our duty is now to christianize the world by imprinting a new Christian law upon it. That is theocratic thinking amounts to. Like other similar forms of thought it leads to a "subtle chiliasm". The "Christian ethics" that we have mentioned can of course be very different according to the different theological contexts in which they appear. Various aspects of culture and the ethics of civilized man may receive a larger or smaller measure of autonomy. Even explicit theocracy will always have to grant them some measure of autonomy. That is true also of the Roman Catholic Church which provides the classical example of the theocratic way of thinking. By connecting the "natural" with the "supernatural" it aims at harmonizing autonomy and theocracy. But we are not concerned here with the greater or lesser variety within the theocratic way of thinking, but rather with its common structure. Wherever this way of thinking is accepted, the law is deduced from the Gospel and the aim is to replace the old law by a new, Christian law, (which may be done even by interpreting the old law allegorically as a sign that foreshadows the new law) to make the world "Christian", or at least to teach the world some kind of Christian discipline by means of the new Christian law. Naturally the highly secularized modern world leaves no room for a genuine theocracy like the papal Church of the late middle ages. What we meet nowadays is a kind of theocracy in disguise in which Christian ethics are represented by bourgeois ethics, colored by traditional Christian ideas. Consequently the theocratic attitude is sometimes purely defensive. Its aim is somehow to halt the progress of modern secularism, e.g. to save bourgeois "Christian" culture from the danger represented by an "anti-Christian" working-class world, or to save the Christian values of the "West" from the threatening pagan "East". We shall be safe in assuming that tendencies such as these will appear among the

churches gathered in Evanston. As an expression of the theocratic way of thinking they, too, represent a strong temptation to secularize Christian hope. If these tendencies gain influence, there will always be danger that the proclamation of Christian hope be falsified. The emphasis will shift away from the return of Christ who shall judge the world to the Christians' effort to christianize the world's history. This shift of emphasis must result in the secularization of hope. That can hardly be helped, even if those who advocate such a shift of emphasis are sufficiently aware of the Church's sin and guilt to know that they must speak of such human efforts with great reticence.

In view of this temptation to secularize Christian hope, the Lutheran Confessions' condemnation of all forms of chiliasm — even of the most subtle and modest — has an important message for the Evanston Assembly. For the real issue at stake is whether we know how to distinguish law and Gospel. If hope is secularized and the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a law according to which we can make the world Christian, then the Gospel can no longer be purely preached. For then it is more important to be Christian according to the new law, than to live as a Christian who hears the Gospel of the vicarious satisfaction of Jesus Christ. As long as law and Gospel are distinguished, Christians are "Christian" only if they hear and believe the Gospel. They will live "Christian" lives by doing the works of the law in Christian faith. But the law in question is not a special "Christian" law. For if it were that, a man would be a Christian by accomplishing the law and not by faith alone. The works done by Christians in the world must be fruits of faith and works of love. They must be done for the sake of our neighbor and his needs, not because of our own ethical accomplishment or for the sake of an ideal. Thus in a sense they are not "Christian" but necessary, needful not in order that we may be Christian — for that is something we can only be by faith — but needful for human life. Where law and Gospel are confused two things are therefore obscured. The fact that sinners are made just or are made Christians by the free gift of the Gospel in Christ, is obscured if side by side with faith there is such a thing as special "Christian" ethics, demanded by a new Gospel-law and commanding other good works than those that every man, Christian and non-Christian, must do for the sake of his neighbor. Secondly, the demands of love are obscured if the Gospel is interpreted as the expression of a particular Christian ethic that Christians should imprint upon the world. For if this is so, then it is no longer clear that Christians can have but



one kind of "ethics". These "ethics" command that all the good works of Christians must be determined only by the needs of their fellow-men and not by ideals that would confer on those who attain them some kind of moral perfection. If our works of love are determined only by the needs of our fellow-men, they can never be specifically Christian. They must simply be those works that fulfil our neighbors' needs. Our obligations will remain the same even though a "Christian" Priest or Levite may pass them by and a non-Christian Samaritan does them. This does not mean that there is no such things as Christian ethics, but it does mean that Christian ethics must be faithful to the principle that works of love may never be determined by a motive other than the real of our fellow-men. They cannot be specifically Christian since human needs always have existed and always will exist, whether Christians have been present or not and because the good works that our fellow-men's need demands of us cannot be changed in character by the presence of a Christian. Christian ethics must be the ethics of love. We must therefore acknowledge the works of love done by non-Christians with as much gratitude as those done by Christians. And we must condemn the Christians' and the non-Christians' lack of charity with equal severity.

## II. Secularism

The Church must proclaim Jesus Christ, who shall return to judge the living and the dead, to be the only hope of the world. It must therefore condemn all utopias, even the Christian utopias that take the form of the most subtle chiliasm. But this carries with it another danger, namely that of changing eschatology into an apocalyptic speculation and thus separating eschatological hope from the service of love. This is the danger of theological or ecclesiastical secularism. In times of fear and despair it is perhaps a greater danger than chiliasm. As chiliasm is a Christian form of secular utopia, so secularism is a Christian variant of nihilism. When the catastrophes of history deceive the world's hope for an undisturbed continuance of its worldliness, utopia easily turns into nihilism. Men become cynical, all effort at improving the world seems to be a stupid illusion and the road is left open to the powers of destruction. The cynical element in nihilism easily harmonizes with Christian or ecclesiastical reaction. Correct, orthodox eschatology is reinterpreted nihilistically. The doctrine that history tends towards its judgment at the return of Christ so that the future of the world lies not within history but beyond the judgment of its worldliness is reinterpreted

nihilistically to mean that history is meaningless. History becomes a merely secular process that "has nothing to do with the Gospel". It follows its own laws, whose meaning remains hidden to us. In any case it is unrelated to the Gospel and to faith. There is no visible essential relation between history as such and the individual's history of salvation. Christians must live in two worlds, in the world of faith and hope that is within us (and in the world of love where love is thought to be a subjective sentiment) and in the external world, ruled by historical necessity. Only in the world within us can we know what God demands of us. In the external world we are subject to historical necessity in which the will of God is not to be directly recognized. If we want to be Christians, we must therefore preserve the inward life of faith, hope and love while living in the hostile external world. This is how things shall remain until the end of the world, when meaningless history shall come to an end. Ideas such as these appear in the most diverse forms and in different theological contexts. Sometimes they are identified with Luther's doctrine of the two realms, which is interpreted to mean that human life must follow its own laws. What interests us here, however, is the structure common to all types of secularist thinking. That structure appears wherever eschatology is made to mean that the last judgment robs all historical decisions of their significance. The whole world and its entire history shall be judged. This is taken to mean that the whole world and its entire history are "sinful" and "condemned" so that all historical decisions are levelled down and rendered alike by the idea of divine judgment. Adolf Hitler and St. Francis of Assisi would then both be "sinners" and "just men" in exactly the same sense. They would be sinners because neither of them accomplished God's absolute demand for righteousness, and they would be just because the same Jesus Christ died for both of them. If now we assume speculatively (without a biblical basis) that the last judgment will be the same for both — since they will be equally condemned as sinners and then equally saved as just men in Jesus Christ — we have indeed provided an eschatological reason for considering every possible decision within history to be absolutely devoid of meaning. But, for one thing, no one has the right to decide on merely speculative grounds that at the last judgment Adolf Hitler might not after all be saved and St. Francis of Assisi condemned. And even apart from that, the ideas we have described are nothing but the expression of integral nihilism.

Even the Christian factor in this nihilistic construction is the idea of an eschatological judgment which is common to Christianity and



Islam. For if every decision within history is ultimately insignificant, the biblical idea that we shall be judged by our works must be abandoned. It might be possible to construct a doctrine according to which every one shall equally and automatically be justified in Jesus Christ, but it is impossible to harmonize it with the idea of a judgment according to our works. If all decisions within history are insignificant and if everyone is automatically a "sinner" and a "just man", the only possible eschatology is a doctrine of "apokatastasis".

We have seen that the idea of an eschatological judgment loses its Christian content as soon as eschatology is made to imply that all decisions within history are deprived of ultimate meaning. For if all men and all things are equally "subject to judgment", then judgment is not according to works but becomes a universal idea of total human sinfulness. Such sinfulness would be unaffected by the commandment that we should love our neighbor. Thus a future judgment according to works becomes meaningless, not only because universal ideas must be valid without limitation and need not be proved correct by an eschatological event, but also because according to this theory all our works have the same value and a judgment that would distinguish them is superfluous.

Naturally, nihilistic secularism nowhere appears in this extreme form. But tendencies of this sort produce a kind of theological defeatism every time that eschatology is used to justify reactionary passivity in face of concrete historical decisions. Defeatist tendencies of that kind are by no means rare on the European continent. Eschatological defeatism can e.g. hamper the struggle for social justice by arguing that perfect justice is impossible in our utterly sinful world and that therefore there is no point in fighting against particular forms of injustice. The same nihilistic form of eschatology can be used with regard to injustice under a totalitarian régime. The demands of the total state are then said to be "what the needs of the hour command us to do" or "historical necessity". On the other hand any opposition against the injustice of despotism is condemned as "Schwaermerei", an unjustifiable attempt to go beyond our eschatological limitations and to realize perfect justice upon earth.

That kind of secularism can also take on traditional Lutheran forms. The Christian's life in the world can e.g. be defined formally as man's rule over the world by means of his reason, without the rule of reason being clearly qualified by the Christian's love for his fellow-men. These ideas appear e.g. in Friedrich Gogarten's

booklet "Verhaengnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit" (The Fate and Hope of Modern Times). Gogarten is strongly opposed to the gnostic idea that the world is uniformly sinful and that decisions within history are therefore meaningless. In spite of this, he is not far from theological secularism, because he has nothing to say in detail concerning the decisions that we have to take. Instead he points to the rule that "all things are lawful", according to which man has "full freedom" or "full power" to make decisions. We have already stressed that the Gospel cannot be a new Christian law and that it cannot be the believers' duty to make the world more Christian. It is true also that reason must be the arbiter of what are the "needful" works of love. But in this context reason is not completely free to decide, as if the rule that "all things are lawful" had no specific content. Reason has no content of its own. It must derive the subject-matter of its decisions from the commandment to which it is subservient. Reason is a merely "technical" aptitude of man. The commandment that we should love our neighbor is not an ethical ideal immanent in our reason but a concrete demand derived from our cohabitation with our fellow-men, that forces us as individuals to abandon our egoism in particular instances for our neighbor's sake. The concrete demands of the law of love are therefore "natural laws", since they are directly derived from the life of society. They make their own claims upon us but they can never be rationally systematized into an immutable "Natural Law". In real common human life both the knowledge of these demands and their fulfilment are in constant opposition to our self-love. They can therefore never be rationally known in their "pure" state. "Natural Law" could exist if men without self-love existed. But if that were so, "Natural Law" would not be needed. The concrete commandment of love always appears as a law, because we, who should love our neighbors, first and foremost love ourselves. But reason's rule over the world is not set in the vacuum of man's autonomy and freedom to decide whatever he will but in the framework of human society where self-love and love of our neighbor are constantly and concretely at odds. It is true that we are justified by faith and are free from the law, so that we need no good works in order to be justified, since we are already justified by faith. But it does not follow from this that when we, as free men, turn to the world in order to do our good works there, we are completely autonomous and are „free“ to do whatever we like. Though we are free from the law we are not free from the love that sums up the law, but we are free for love. The curse of the law, from which faith frees us, means that our desire to be



justified by fulfilling the law is egoistic and in opposition to the love in which all the law is summed up. The law sets man against himself, since its demands drive sinful man to pervert the fulfilment of the law, which should be an act of love, into an advantage for himself, i.e. into an act of self-love. That is the curse of the law, from which faith delivers us. But we are not free from the commandment to love our neighbor which is based on our neighbor's real need. On the contrary, faith makes us free to hear the commandment, to hear our neighbor's need calling to us.

Since we have been delivered from the curse of the law, it is our duty in this world to serve the law of love with our "reason". In certain respects this duty is "secular", a genuine piece of "secularization". For when we set about fulfilling it we must on no account try to further the "interests" of the „churches" or to assure the "future" of "Christianity".

To serve our neighbor must be our only criterion. It follows from this that Christians should not e.g. isolate themselves in "Christian" groups or parties, which are nothing but the expression of theocratic self-sufficiency. Quite on the contrary, we should be ready to cooperate objectively with any and all who are willing to do so. Perhaps that is exactly what Gogarten means when he speaks of the freedom and power granted to the adult son. But the fact that Gogarten has so little to say about the quality of the power given to reason, arouses the suspicion that he may be attributing a certain "autonomy" to reason and to its power. In that case the power of choice given to reason might well dispense us from the obligation to love our neighbor, which is exactly what the absolute rulers of our century do, when they use their "reason" and their "power of choice". This would reveal a certain nihilism at the basis of the entire conception. The reason for it may be that Gogarten has some difficulty in speaking positively about the commandment to love our neighbors, no doubt, because he, too, derives that commandment from the Gospel. But we know the inevitable result of this procedure. If love of our neighbor is said to be the content of the works of faith to which we are committed in our profession and estate, then it becomes impossible to avoid the suspicion that the Gospel is being made into a new law. The terms "neighbor" and "love of our neighbor" are used as Kierkegaard uses them, not in the context of daily life in our profession and estate but in the context of an unworldly existence in faith. A passage that is characteristic of Gogarten is to be found in his book "Die Verkuendigung Jesu Christi" (The Proclamation of Jesus Christ), (pp 107—122). "We must

cease to claim for ourselves any kind of justice that we ourselves might achieve. Therefore we must trust only in God's own goodness, which is due to nothing but the sovereignty of His godhead. It is on this basis that we must understand our own reality, which has no cause and no security in the world and which becomes ours only through faith in God and love for Him. That is condition for understanding the same reality that our fellow-men have as certainly as they are creatures of God" (pg 113). If the reality of our neighbor as neighbor can be known only in faith, then it is the Gospel that makes him our neighbor. In that case love of our neighbor cannot be the content of our reason's power of choice in the world, otherwise it would again mean changing the Gospel into a new law. That is why Gogarten, again in harmony with Kierkegaard, continues: "This close connection between faith in God and love of our neighbor shows that Jesus' commandment that we love our neighbor is not a commandment in the normal sense of the term. Normally a commandment means that we have to do one thing or another in a world where we have the power to choose. But like God's demand that we believe in Him, the commandment to love our neighbor calls us out of that world and promises us a life that we do not control or use but which we simply receive from Him."

If our love of our neighbor is transferred from the sphere of good works to the sphere of faith, then good works are made subject to reason's "power of choice", which is not necessarily determined by our love to our neighbor. And that is "secularism" or Christian nihilism. Law and Gospel are not only distinguished but completely separated. The consequences of principles like these reach right into Christology. For if we separate law and Gospel, we must also separate the Godhead and the manhood in Jesus Christ. The unity of the person of Jesus Christ, His unity as true God and true man, means that in Him divine and human love are one, and that the human love, which made Him take our place and fulfil the law in our stead, reveals the love of God in its fulness. The corollary of this doctrine is that our law, through which we creatures know our Creator's will, is summed up in the same love as that shown to us by Jesus Christ, which is the revelation of the love of God.

It may be possible to distinguish two kinds of love for our neighbor. One would be the ultimate reason for every human action. As in the "usus civilis" of the law, it breaks down our self-love — at least partially and superficially — by responding to the demands made upon us by our fellow-men. It is conceived as part of the world of reason in which we exercise our free advice. The other



kind of "love for our neighbor" would be revealed to us only through faith in God. But if we assume these two kinds of love to be essentially different, then we cannot believe that the love of Jesus Christ reveals Him as true man, nor that He fulfilled the law for us. In that case faith in Him does not enable us to serve our neighbor. Instead it merely clears the way for a negative "secularizing" tendency by allowing us to determine all things by means of our autonomous reason. A docetic doctrine of the law must always include a docetic conception of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

This secularist tendency is particularly strong in continental European theology. But there, too, the Lutheran Confessions may serve as a corrective. In Article 16 of the Augsburg Confession we read: "We also condemn those who teach that Christian perfection lies in abandoning our house, our wife or our children, and to renounce all those things that we have mentioned before. But true perfection lies only in the true fear of God and true faith in God. For the Gospel does not teach us an external or temporal way of life, but an interior and eternal way and the justice that we should have in our hearts. It condemns neither civil government, nor the state, nor matrimony, but urges us to observe all these ordinances as truly coming from God and in so doing to show Christian love and true good works, each of us according to his vocation."

This article rejects not only the other-worldly doctrines of the 16th century Anabaptists, but also their modern and successor variant the Christian nihilism and secularism of today. The common factor of Anabaptism and its modern counterpart is the devaluation of this world and of our life here on earth in favor of the life of faith within the soul of the believer. Secularism is always the ultimate end of every kind of other-worldly pietism. But the Augsburg Confession stresses that our terrestial calling is subject not only to reason and to its "power of choice" but also to the divine ordinances of love and the good works that God gives us to do. This means that law and Gospel may not be separated, though they must be distinguished. Only the Gospel enables us to attain everlasting justice. The good works done in accordance with the "civil use" of the law are merely temporal. The justice they give us is nothing more than "justitia civilis". Nevertheless they are works of "Christian love", since they are done in faith and are not perverted by a desire to justify ourselves or to attain eternal justice by means of good works. We do not perform these works as if we were "free to choose", without reference to the needs of our neighbor, but

quite on the contrary, because they are good works, i.e. actions that profit our fellow-men.

On the other hand we also know an evil form of the “free choice of our reason”, which urges us to do evil works, i.e. works that do damage to our neighbor. Of this kind of “free choice of our reason”, Article 16 says: “If we cannot without sin do what those in authority command us to do, then we ought to obey God rather than men”. There is an infallible criterion by which we can determine whether a particular type of theology is truly Lutheran or whether it is secularized. It is Lutheran if in dealing with the subject of “the free choice of our reason” it is aware of the “problem” created by political tyranny. If it ignores that problem, it is secularist. It would seem odd, however, to ignore a problem of that kind in this totalitarian age.

### **Hope and love are one in faith**

“Jesus Christ—the Hope of the World”. In these words all secular hopes, all forms of utopia, both non-Christian and Christian-theocratic are rejected. The judgment that these words announce calls upon “chiliasts” of all kinds to amend their ways. Jesus Christ, the Hope of the World, is the sworn enemy of all secular hope. He is the Hope of the World because he will return for the last judgment. In Evanston we shall have to point that out quite clearly to all those who believe in a Christian utopia. But for all that, we shall not agree with the secularists, for our hope does not make our terrestrial hopes irrelevant or insignificant. Though we testify to the return of Jesus Christ, we hold no brief for apocalyptic speculations. He will return to judge us according to our works. Therefore our hope points us to the works of love that we have to do. Only in connection with such works of love is our hope genuine hope and not empty speculation.

Thus hope and love are closely interwoven. In faith they are one. Faith sees in secret. Thus it can see the world as the new earth under the heavens of God and it hopes for the judgment that will put an end to the world’s worldliness and reveal the new earth under the new heavens. Our faith must make us serve the world in love, because it has true hope for the world and rejects all false hope, be it ever so Christian in appearance. The world cannot become perfect, nor can it be ultimately God’s own within the limits of its own history. That is possible only beyond the last judgment. Hence the world, where worldliness, i.e. self-love triumphs at all times, is



at all times in need of genuine love. But genuine love is always borne and upheld by the love of the Crucified. In spite of the triumph of self-love, genuine love can never tire because its hope lies not in this world but in the world to come, so that neither crucifixion nor defeat can prevail against it. Whatever the future may have in store for us, we know that such love can give our world joy and vision even within the limits of its historical future.

Of course it is possible to change our hope in Jesus Christ into some form of secular hope. If we do this, we shall have allowed our longing for utopia to take the place of love's service in this world of time and space. It is also possible to make our hope in Jesus Christ appear irrelevant to our earthly life. But then love disappears from this world and follows after hope on the way to "another" world that lies "within" us.

True Christian hope for the return of Jesus Christ looks forward to the world to come and to nothing else. Thus love is both made free and bound to serve this suffering, love-less world.

The Evanston Assembly will have to testify to our hope in Jesus Christ. In so doing it should expose the falseness of all Christian forms of utopia and all secular hopes. It should also give rise to a new, living service of love to the world that goes towards its judgment. That would prove that the Assembly had heard and understood the message of Jesus Christ, the Hope of the World.

*Sed dices: quomodo ergo homo constitutus est rerum dominus, Gene. 2., si non potest illas secundum suam voluntatem regere et pro suo voto uti? Responde: Sic sumus constituti rerum domini, ut possimus eis uti in praesens. Sed non possumus eas nostris curis et studiis regere. Nemo potest aliquid suis studiis efficere in posterum. Qui enim futurorum incertus est, quomodo de futuris constituere poterit? Vult ergo Deus nos uti creaturis, sed libere, ut ille obtulerit, sine tempore, sine modo et hora a nobis praescriptis. Haec enim sunt in manu Domini, ut non putemus in manu nostra esse uti rebus, quando velimus, si ille non dat. Hinc dicit Ecclesiasticus: „Deus reliquit hominem in manu consilii sui,“ sed addidit praecepta, secundum quae sua consilia et actiones regat.*

ROBERT VAN DEUSEN

## Christians in the Struggle for World Community

One task of the World Council of Churches at its Evanston Assembly will be to bear witness in relevant and contemporary terms to the meaning of the Christian hope for a world in turmoil. The testimony of the churches must be based on enduring Christian principles. But it must deal in a concrete way with specific questions which are troubling men's minds and hearts today.

Christ must be proclaimed at Evanston as the Lord of history: invading human history as the Redeemer, consummating it in His return in final triumph — and working through living men and women to affect the unfolding of history in 1954! The voice of Christ, the hope of the world, must be heard by the man on the street and by men in places of great responsibility in words which they can understand.

In confronting the problems of international affairs, the fourth section of the Assembly will consider the theme "Christians in the Struggle for World Community". The wording of this topic implies the recognition of three important truths: 1. The people and the nations of the world have become so interrelated in their influence on one another, either for good or evil, that the achievement of common purpose, of fellowship and understanding across national lines, must be an urgent goal of human society. 2. The cleavages in the world — political, social, economic, racial, religious — are so deep and so fraught with bitter emotion that progress toward world community can be made only at the price of struggle: honest heart-searching and repentance, painful grappling with complex problems, sturdy defense of the principles of justice and freedom, and sacrificial efforts at reconciliation. 3. Christians in all parts of the world are inescapably involved in this struggle and should play a courageous and constructive role, confessing their share of the guilt for a dis-mitted world, witnessing to the redemptive power of Christ in human relationships, and applying that power to the solution of specific problems which keep the world from a sense of kinship.



### **The need of consensus**

The task of the Evanston Assembly in speaking on international affairs will be a difficult one. There is lack of unanimity on a number of important issues: the relationship of the church to the state in varied national settings; the question as to whether and to what extent the church should bear corporate witness on social, economic, and political affairs; the effect of East-West tensions on the ecumenical Christian fellowship; the attitude of the churches on questions of war and peace.

It is to be expected that Christians coming from such a wide variety of national and ecclesiastical backgrounds will represent different streams of thought and conviction. In such a setting, unanimity would be a sign of shallow thinking. But lack of complete agreement should not keep the delegates from seeking to reach a consensus on many important points. Consensus — the crystallizing of common convictions among people of varied viewpoints — is a sign of mature and creative thinking.

Many burning questions will face the Evanston delegates, questions to which the world is desperately seeking an answer. How can the atom and hydrogen bombs be controlled? How can East and West learn to live together without resort to war or threat of war? How can antagonism between the white and the non-white races be resolved? How can the aspirations of subject peoples be realized without aiding the spread of communism? How can the needs of less developed areas for adequate food, shelter, health, and education be met? How can homes be provided for the homeless millions?

These and many other issues demand the serious attention, not only of the few who will be privileged to gather at Evanston, but of thinking Christians throughout the world. Consensus needs desperately to be achieved. How can Christians make a concerted impact in the struggle for world community? There are three major ways in which this may be done: 1) through the life and work of the church; 2) through the witness of the church to the world on international issues; and 3) through the influence of individual Christians as members of society.

### **The life of the church**

The church is itself an international fellowship. It provides in its own breadth of outreach the great example of world community. The idea of a brotherhood of nations has found fertile soil in the brother-

hood of believers in Christ, and may even have found its origin there. When churchmen from every continent and of many races meet at Evanston, they will provide a powerful demonstration of global fellowship. The missionary enterprise of the church has been the seed-bed of ideas which have been appropriated by people and movements outside the church. The urge to raise living standards in less developed areas of the world has its root and its prototype in medical, educational, agricultural, and industrial missions. Men like Albert Schweitzer and Frank Laubach have blazed trails and planted the cross in uncharted territory. The world has instinctively followed some of those trails in its search for international fellowship.

One of the major tragedies of our day is that the pattern which the church has set before the world has sometimes been a distorted one. There have been glaring examples of lack of brotherhood, of racial prejudice, of western pride, of eastern resentment, of nationalism overshadowing religious faith, that have given a negative rather than a positive witness. Trails have not been blazed fast enough nor far enough to keep up with the march of history. The progress which communism is making among the masses of Asia is a measure of the failure of the missionary program of the churches. They have had a century of opportunity to capture the imagination and idealism of the people of Asia. Many missionaries have made a powerful impact, proclaiming the love of Christ in a well-rounded spiritual, physical, and social ministry. But the "sending churches" have too often failed to realize the immensity of the need, and to pour in men and money adequate to the challenge.

Another blind spot in the life of the churches is the failure to practice at home the same kind of international and interracial fellowship which is implied in the missionary program of the church. Let me use the problem of race relations in the United States as an example because I know it best. American churches have long been concerned with improving the status and treatment of Negroes and other minorities. Much of the pioneering in human relations in this area has come from church leaders, both in the North and in the South. But the hard fact remains that the pattern of racial segregation has been accepted by most churches, and that there are many people who resist any effort to break the pattern. Court decisions on racial integration have in many cases outrun the conscience of the church. We send missionaries to Liberia, build schools and hospitals there. But when the Liberian Embassy locates a few blocks from one of our churches in Washington, the people become disturbed about the changing neighbourhood and lowered property values.



In Asia and Africa, communists have capitalized on the race problems in the United States to foster hatred toward the West. I can not help wondering how large a part the knowledge of segregation in American churches has played in the increasing resistance to Christian missions among the dark-skinned peoples of the world. What a powerful witness it would be for Christ, what a step toward international understanding, if the churches even at this late date were to break the shackles of custom and pioneer in Christian brotherhood!

I have put my finger on one of the sore spots in American church life. In churches of other countries, there are equally sensitive areas. Before speaking to the world on questions of international relations, the churches need to re-appraise their own inner life, and yield to the surgery of the Holy Spirit those blemishes which weaken the witness of the church to the world. Without such surgery, the church will forfeit that vibrant health which God is eager to bestow on it.

### **The witness of the church**

When the church goes beyond the preaching of the gospel and the administering of the sacraments, and begins to express convictions on social, economic, and political questions, it is sure to stir up controversy, both within and without the church. Yet more and more church leaders are coming to the conviction that the church as the body of Christ has the right and the duty to interpret and apply the gospel in terms of important current issues, including those involving international relations. Today's curcial decisions are made amid a clamour of strident and confusing voices. When the church is silent, something vital is missing. Where many other groups try to influence public sentiment on the basis of their own self-interest, the church should speak on the basis of spiritual insights, ethical and moral principles, and concern for human welfare.

Some would challenge the right of the church to speak on current issues, claiming that this goes beyond its basic functions of spiritual ministry to individuals. But the church is responsible also for a Christian witness to society as a whole. Corporate sin needs to be challenged as well as sin in the lives of individuals, and the message of the Gospel made clear in terms of group relationships. A more valid criticism is that church bodies and their leaders are seldom competent to contribute constructively to discussions which involve technical knowledge. Both world problems and domestic affairs have become so complex, that often one needs to be a lawyer, or an econ-

omist, or a specialist in international relations, in order to express a well-founded opinion.

The answer of the churches is the use of specialists in various fields. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States learned that lesson three decades ago, and ever since has been training men and women in specialized fields: law, economics, labour-management relations, agriculture, political science, journalism, and many others. The Protestant churches are beginning to do the same on a smaller scale. In some cases specialists in various fields are employed as full time or part time staff members of church bodies or councils of churches. In other cases, the specialized skills of trained laymen are used on a voluntary basis. Where no ready-made specialists are available, an individual or a committee is assigned to study a particular field of interest, so as to build up a fund of accurate knowledge in that area.

An outstanding example of this trend is the work of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. Through its director, Dr. O. Fred Nolde, and other staff members it has played a vital part in the witness of the church to governmental agencies at the national and international level. In workmanlike fashion, CCIA has applied Christian insights to the specifics of world problems and has worked out a substantial area of agreement among the churches. When the fourth section at the Evanston Assembly tackles such tough questions as the strength and weakness of the United Nations, proposals for world disarmament, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the right of self-determination as related to dependent peoples, the experience gained by CCIA, and its guidance in the discussion, will be invaluable. Pronouncements on international affairs at Evanston will have specialized knowledge behind them.

Effective Christian witness in the field of international affairs involves the question of church-state relationships. Although the churches of the world will speak with a common voice at Evanston, when the churchmen return to their homes they will have to deal with their own national governments. The techniques by which the church bears witness to the state will vary with the situation in the several countries. In some instances, criticism of government policies may be dangerous; in others, embarrassing; in others, futile; in others, effective in varying degrees. Several considerations should be kept in mind: 1. The witness of the church to the state should be based on Christian principles, nor on secular considerations nor on advantage or disadvantage to the church itself. 2. The church should be willing to praise actions of the state as well as expressing criticism.



If it is to serve as the conscience of the state, it should exercise the dual function of approval and disapproval. 3. The church should retain the prerogative of continuing judgment. It should not give blanket endorsement to any government policy or program, lest a change in its direction leave the church in the position of supporting what it can not conscientiously approve. 4. The church should express the general principles on which its judgment is based, but should also be willing to make specific recommendations for action. These should be based on careful research and full knowledge of the pertinent facts. 5. The influence of the church should not be exerted in the form of pressure, but on the basis of the validity and the moral authority of the principles involved. 6. The church in witnessing to a national state should be conscious of the world-wide Christian fellowship of which it is a part. Far from being awed or apologetic in approaching government officials, church leaders should be deeply aware of the worth of Christian convictions, and of the urgency of the church's role as the witness to God's truth.

### **The influence of Christians**

There is a third major way in which Christians may make an effective contribution toward national understanding. This is through their influence as members of society. The inner life of the church and the voice of the church in speaking to the world provide a powerful witness. But the most potent testimony of all takes place when individuals let Christ speak through them in all their personal and social relationships.

A resurgence of vitality has come to the church from its new emphasis on the importance of laymen and women in its work. For example, the Evangelical Academies in Germany where doctors, lawyers, editors, labor leaders, business executives, come together to discuss the relevance of the Christian faith to their field of service, have created a new standard of discipleship in daily life. Christian life service used to be thought of as referring to the ministry, the diaconate, missionary work, and other full time service to the church. In its new and truer perspective, life service includes every occupation which can be followed with good conscience by a Christian. Vocational counseling on a Christian basis now seeks to guide young people into whatever field their interests and aptitudes indicate, with the purpose of finding in that occupation a calling to Christian service.

Some avenues of work provide more direct opportunities than others for exerting influence toward international understanding. Occupations having to do with ideas, such as teaching, preaching, or writing; with mass media of communication, such as radio, television, or journalism; with national policy, such as law and government service, have unusual opportunities in helping to shape the direction of public sentiment and the trend of world events. The church should feel urgently responsible for giving its members a sense of Christian mission in their occupation. An area of influence which is open to every Christian is the creation of public opinion. Ideas grow by geometric progression, as an individual's well-expressed viewpoint becomes shared by a circle of those around him. A person convinced of the need for world brotherhood can do a great deal to counteract prejudiced and thoughtless attitudes. Still another channel of Christian witness is the exercise of the responsibilities of citizenship. An individual who votes intelligently, who keeps informed on public affairs, who bases his convictions on Christian principles, who expresses those convictions to his representatives in the government, is rendering effective testimony to the reality of his faith. A Christian who exercises his citizenship as a stewardship from God, while he is rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, can at the same time render unto God the things that are God's.

In order to make their witness on international affairs intelligent and effective, Christians need to be well informed as to the issues involved. Books, newspapers, magazines, brochures on special subjects, should be studied carefully in order that opinions may be founded on facts. In exploring the relevance of Christian principles to international issues, individuals should make use of the study materials provided by church agencies. The World Council of Churches produces study guides for individual and group use which give background information and stimulate Christian thinking on world affairs.

The Evanston Assembly will be a high point in the life of the churches, as they find fellowship in the ecumenical movement. The conscience of Evanston, sharpened by the search for corporate Christian convictions, must be translated by Christians everywhere in terms of the poignant problems of their own countries and of their own people, in order to make the maximum contribution to world community.



GERHARD BRENNECKE

## The Church Amidst National and Racial Tensions

### **Racial Questions Need Special Attention**

It has been asked why the second Assembly of the World Council of Churches needs a special section dealing with national and racial tensions. After all, these problems received due attention at the Amsterdam Assembly, though they were there discussed in the two big sections that dealt with social and international affairs. These two sections will meet again in Evanston. Would it not have been possible to let them take care again of national and racial problems?

It might have been done, but experience has shown that in Amsterdam — as over against the Oxford Conference of 1937 — racial questions did not receive sufficiently thorough consideration. During the last years these questions have been in the forefront of world-wide discussion, not least on account of what has happened in South Africa. The fact that the South African churches themselves have not been able to reach a common point of view makes it necessary for the churches of the world to think these things out and to help their brethren with their advice. Or better still, we should together with our brethren for whom race-relations have become a burning problem, search the Scriptures to find out what we should think and do.

Race problems do not exist in Africa alone. They are a burning international problem, that we shall have to see in all its complexity. Often enough, too, racial tensions include much more than merely problems of race-relations. The fact that the UNESCO has taken up the question and has published some excellent literature on the subject shows to what extent public opinion has been aroused all over the world. It would be a fateful error if the Church were to turn away and ignore the question where its own interests are not directly at stake. The ecumenical movement and the great confessional organizations — not least The Lutheran World Federation itself — are in themselves a contribution to the solution of the problem. Racial discrimination has never been permitted at ecumenical meetings. On the other hand we must admit that certain

member churches of the ecumenical movement are not sure what their obedience to the Word of God implies for them with regard to the problems created by racial and national tensions. We should therefore heartily approve the creation of a special section on national and racial tensions at Evanston. The section should render the whole church an important, not to say vital, service and we can but hope that its discussions will result in concrete and useful proposals.

### **What are Race-Problems?**

Certain nations have wielded power over others as far back in history as we can go. Of course the term "race" should not be used in this context without qualification. What we mean is that certain peoples, or certain cultures, are politically, militarily or even culturally, superior to others. Racial differences play a minor part, unless we see the exploitation of such differences in the institution of slavery.

The racial problem that we know today has increasingly pre-occupied the world since the 17th century, when the "white race" outgrew the limits of Europe and practically took possession of the whole world. The ways in which the domination of the white man over other races manifested itself, were different in America, Asia and Africa. They went from the complete extermination of some peoples to various forms of more or less peaceful domination of and co-existence with others. But the common factor was always the superiority of the one and the real or imagined inferiority of the other. The power of the "white" race and its domination over infinitely larger numbers of brown, black and yellow men all over the world, was at its height during the 18th and 19th centuries.

The two world wars put an end to this rule of the white man and of the white "race". Large numbers of white people still have not realized it. At least they consciously or unconsciously refuse to draw the necessary consequences.

In the world of today men of various colonies and "races" have gained equal influence and importance. If we compare contemporary statistics, we shall see that roughly 750 million white men live side by side with twice as many people of "coloured" races:

600 million East Asians

610 million brown Asians

180 million Negroes

60 million "red" Indians and Mestizos.



Even the contrast between "white" and "coloured" is questionable. White people too have a "colour" and it might be better not to use these contrasting terms. It is hard to get rid of the feeling that the idea of a "coloured" world contains reminiscences of the far-away days of slavery.

There can be no doubt that the races are today in the process of obtaining equality. It has frequently been pointed out that since the second world war some 1200 million men, i.e. one half of humanity, has obtained a new political status. The fact that with only a few exceptions this half of humanity belongs to other races than the white shows which way the development is going. The second world war did more than anything else to speed up the process of emancipation.

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We have purposely used the word "race" with great care, in some cases putting it into inverted commas, at other times replacing or explaining it by "peoples". Unfortunately, lack of space does not allow us to deal more thoroughly with the contemporary, international discussions of the race-problem. But we must point out that biologists, anthropologists and psychologists are no longer certain whether the concept of race can still be maintained. The UNESCO investigations give the following definition of a race: "A race is a group of men who by their birth have in common certain physical characteristics and who originated in the same geographical area."

Even this definition is only provisional and we may well ask whether it can be maintained. National, religious, geographical, linguistic and cultural groups are not necessarily identical with races. Moreover, we have known for a long time that pure races practically do not exist. More and more people propose that we drop the term "race" altogether and speak instead of "peoples" or national groups. The scientists who defend this idea, point out that basically there is but one race, namely the human. The "races" are by and large nothing but sub-groups of the species of homo sapiens.

We can do no more than point to this development. But we do believe that even on the scientific level certain new lines will soon appear more and more clearly. In view of this it is obvious that the attempt to keep one "race" pure can only have the one aim of securing the superiority of one national group over one or more other groups.

### Attempted Solutions

The racial tensions of our day, however, still involve "races" in the older meaning of the term. But we should not forget that these tensions involve much more than contrasts between races. The colour of men's skins has largely become a symbol of certain definite human groupings. This is obviously so in South Africa. We shall not be able to understand the South African race problem unless we realize that it is at the same time — perhaps we should say: primarily — a struggle of classes and social and economic interests.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore racial tensions of the older kind and we must ask ourselves what attempts have been or can be made to solve the problem on a secular level.

There are three possibilities of which we can give but a rough sketch here:

1. Integration or Assimilation. The final result of this solution is the growth of a new "race" — if the term race can be applied here (cf. South America).
2. Pluralism or Parallelism. The racial or national groups retain their characteristics but none is superior to the other (cf. Englishmen and Maoris in New Zealand).
3. Segregation or Apartheid. Two groups remain separate in every respect — politically, culturally, socially, etc. In most cases — at least so far — one group is subject to the other. The aim is however, to allow both or all groups to develop equally though separately (cf. South Africa).

Beside these three solutions there are two others, by means of which racial tensions can be totally surmounted and that are of great significance for both Asia and Africa. They are Islam and Communism. Neither of these movements know anything like race distinction, either in theory or in practice. In considering the race problem we cannot afford to pass these total solutions by, since their influence is making itself felt all over the non-European world.

### The USA and South Africa

Whenever racial problems are discussed nowadays, South Africa is bound to be mentioned. The South Africans themselves usually point out — not without bitterness — that even in so democratic a country as the United States of America the problem of black and



white plays an important part, and that some circles advocate solutions that are similar to the much-discussed Apartheid policy of South Africa.

Racial problems are to be found in many other parts of the world. But here we should like only to point out that both in South Africa and in the U.S.A. the racial problems are larger than the question of black and white. In South Africa it includes that of the Asians (mostly Indians) and the "Coloured" (i. e. men of mixed race), in the U.S.A. it touches the Mexicans in the South-West and the Chinese and Japanese in the West. In Malaya the population is multi-racial. There is the problem of the relations between Burmese and Karens in Burma or between Indonesians and Chinese in Indonesia. Even in South America there are still difficulties between "white" people and Indians. Finally, there are the very complex minority problems of the Balkans. They show that the real question is not one of race, but of nationality.

It is true that the relations between black and white people in the U.S.A. have profoundly changed since the second world war. Dr. Ben Marais, a South African Reformed pastor, now professor of theology in the University of Pretoria, writes in his book "Colour — Unsolved Problem of the West" (1953), about the U.S.A.: "... I am convinced that the average American, except for large groups in the South, are beginning to regard the negro as a fellow-citizen. Not that people in the North previously granted the negro no rights, or that they are now all at once granting him all rights, but the fact is, that in the inner attitude of the average American there has come an unmistakable change and as a result he is, for the first time, beginning to think, in practice, of the negro as a fellow-citizen". For this, Marais quotes the following striking examples: "... The American blood transfusion service in one of the border states this year resolved that in future there would be no difference made between negro and white blood. Whites and negroes who need blood, will be given blood, and nobody will know whether it is the blood of a white person or of a negro. Should anybody insist on getting a white person's blood, he will have to find it himself. The American Red Cross this year also adopted that as its official policy."

In spite of all this there is still much discrimination, a good deal of separation and much contempt of the black man merely on account of his colour. The principle of equality may be generally recognized, but actual practice still lies some way behind.

This is true also of the churches. Marais lists five different situations that exist in this respect in the American churches.

1. Some churches, especially in large cities like New York, Philadelphia and Washington, have mixed congregations. Most of these have been founded recently and consist of whites and non-whites who form one congregation in which no racial discrimination exists. As a rule these congregations have no denominational connections.
2. A small percentage of black people belongs to white churches.
3. A larger percentage of black people belongs to black congregations connected with white denominations.
4. Black people belong to exclusively Negro churches such as the National Baptist Convention, Inc., The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church. They have contacts with white churches at the top level and at conferences.
5. Black people belong to Negro Protestant Churches such as the Coloured Primitive Baptists, that have no contacts with white churches, not even at the highest level.

Of the roughly 8 Million black people who are members of Protestant churches, 7.5 millions belong to purely Negro churches (groups 4 and 5). Only 500.000 are members of Protestant churches that also have white members.

Nevertheless there is no denying that the race problem in the U.S.A. is—however slowly—moving towards a solution that consists in the abolition of all measures of discrimination or separation. In South Africa the opposite tendency is at least temporarily prevailing. The aim is there to make the separation between the races or population groups more effective and everything is done to justify this ideologically, politically, economically and socially. Of course we have to admit that the situation in South Africa is not the same as in the U.S.A. Only 20 % of a total population of 12 millions is European. 70 % are black, 8 % "coloured" and 2 % Asians. In the U.S.A. the proportion is roughly 10 % black to 90 % white. The problem in the U.S.A. is therefore whether the 90 % people will be able to absorb the 10 % by way of complete social integration or even by way of complete racial union. In South Africa on the other hand, white men fear that unless they insist on racial separation, they will be absorbed by the 70 % black population. The South Africans say that from a racial point of view Americans can pursue a policy of assimilation while remaining certain that the U.S. remain a white man's country. This is not so in South Africa. The background of the policy of Apartheid is thus the white man's self-defence in the struggle for his home-land. Besides, the fact



that South Africa is the white man's homeland should not be overlooked. Unlike the former British possessions in Asia, or Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, etc, it is not a colony. If South Africa came to be governed by black people, the white men there could not simply "go home" for they have no other home. On the other hand the Bantus, who today make up the black population, did not take possession of the land very much earlier than the white men. While the latter came from the South, they entered from the North. Conflicts between black and white men did not really occur before the 19th century. The original local population that the white men first met in the Cape province, the Hottentots and Bushmen, have practically died out or been exterminated.

However, in the course of history, the 70 % of Bantus have not only become subject to the white man, but they have also been consciously made into a proletariat. This is where the real difficulties of the so-called racial problem lie. White man = wealthy ruling class; black man = poor subjected class. We cannot go into further details here, but what we have said should be enough to show how great the difficulties really are.

The present government of South Africa knows but one solution for these racial and social tensions. Each population group should develop separately so as to create its own administration and leadership. Some go so far as to dream of two independent South African states, one black and one white, with nothing in common but the top-level political administration.

The final result of Apartheid would be to make the black men strangers and foreigners under alien rule, excluded from society, in all those parts of the country where they are at present working. Numerous circles, especially in the towns, feel this even now quite strongly. We shall therefore have to wait and see whether a solution for South Africa can be found along those lines without serving merely the white man's interests. A genuine solution should enable black and white man, who after all cannot exist in this part of the world without each other, to live together. But we cannot and must not deny that the difficulties in South Africa are greater than anywhere else in the world.

### **The Racial Question and the Church**

How can our faith in Jesus Christ show us the one answer to these various questions?

Let us begin by saying quite simply that the Bible says nothing about the racial question as we understand it today. The result has been

that throughout the ages and especially during the 19th century various peoples have pretended that like ancient Israel they were the chosen people with whom God had made a particular alliance. It seems hardly necessary to point out that all such comparisons with Israel are impossible. The Old Testament does not demand that the people of God keep themselves pure and maintain their national integrity merely on racial grounds. In any case Israel was a racially composite people. The only reasons for these laws was God's election of Israel. The early church knows nothing of racial qualifications or disqualifications for membership in its congregations. Only in modern times has the racial question become a problem for the church. The problem is set by the world but the answer that the church gives shows unmistakably how far the world determines what the church of our day says and does. To prove this we need but quote from a proclamation of the Reformed Churches of South Africa: "Those who are less developed in matters of the church and religion shall first have to become mature and enter into their entire heritage. Then only shall we be able to join hands — in the true sense of that term — in a spiritual communion. In that communion everyone will contribute to our mutual enrichment from his natural and God-given resources 'until we all come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (Eph. 4, 13). As we work towards this ideal, we must learn to have faith in each other, because we believe in God and in His revelation in Jesus Christ."

The preparatory conference for Evanston formulated from theological principles that deal with the fundamental issues of the racial problem. It was asked what consequences could be drawn for the relations between the races from the doctrine of Creation, from the Incarnation, from the biblical teaching on the New Creation and from the New Testament doctrine of the Church. The four principles have one thing in common, i.e. that all humanity is one and that the differences that the world knows are if not abolished, then at least overcome in the Church, in so far as they create tensions.

The most important biblical statements on this subject are those on the reality of the new creation: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This is where Section 5 of the Evanston Assembly comes closest to the general theme. As the human race was once created as a unity, so it will once, as a unity, have to stand before God. The cross and the resurrection of Christ have won the victory over sin, and have established a new relationship between God and



man. As a result, the relations between men, that had been disrupted by pride and guilt, have also been recreated.

Both as individual Christians and as the Church of Jesus Christ our problem is always that of the "interim" period between Christ's resurrection and his return, between the salvation wrought for us on the cross and the perfection of the Kingdom of God. It is within this tension that we have to seek an answer to the question of race-relations within the Christian Church. The answer — and all of life — must be determined by what St. John says (1. John 3): "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be . . ." That is the tension that we must bear and in which we must consciously live. But what does that mean? There are two ways that we must reject. One is the way of resignation that argues that since the last things have not yet come, we should leave things as they are and can allow secular political thinking to influence even our Christian decisions. People have chosen this way again and again. But the other way is just as fateful in its consequences. It is the way of "Schwärmerei": Christians imagine that they can set up the perfect Kingdom of God here on earth.

The Kingdom of God does not merely belong to the future. In Christ the Kingdom has already come and its signs can be perceived wherever His name is preached and men come together to hear His word and celebrate His sacraments. The church of Jesus Christ cannot and must not deny that it is part of His Kingdom here and now.

But this means that the Church of Jesus Christ cannot allow its life to be determined by racial separation. The church must not allow itself to be made into a national or racial unit that would cut it off from other members of the church and draw its strength from something else than the word of God. The same argument, however, holds true also against any kind of "world" church based on secular or political ideas. The Church can only be the Church of Jesus Christ in the world. In America and in South Africa it is as much as anywhere else the Church of the risen Lord who will come again. It must therefore set up signs of His Kingdom in the midst of this world, amidst the tension between races and nations. It must do so by its existence, its witness and, if necessary, by its suffering.

A church that supports a political system denies its essential mission. There is but one way in which the church can influence the world and cooperate in the life of a nation, and that is the way of active and passive witness. Every other way leads into the ideological sphere and thus falsifies the Christian message.

This does not mean that the concrete situation of the world is without importance in the church. The Church cannot speak to the world without knowing the world's reality. The life of Christian service and even the organization of the Church may therefore take on different forms. We need but think of how the various languages influence the life of the Church. Thus also there is no reason why there should not be Christian communities within certain nations or races. There is nothing wrong about that, unless these communities close their doors to Christian brethren from other human groups. The fact that all Christians are brethren must be visibly manifested. There must be some possibility of their coming together, even though only on particular occasions. The light of the world, the salt of the earth, the city set on a hill — all these imply that the fundamental traits of the Church of Jesus Christ, that lives in faith in Christ the risen and returning Lord, can be seen by the world in any Christian community, even if it is in practice limited to one given nation or race.

We must not think that the Church's life or witness does not influence the world. Christians who have fraternal communion with members of other races and classes, are bound to make other decisions in their so-called secular life than those who deny this fraternal relationship.

This is what is really decisive. In the last analysis the whole matter is the responsibility of the individual Christians who obey their Lord. The church must not grow weary in calling men to that obedience. Obedience begins where Christians are led to do penitence.

White Christendom bears a heavy burden of guilt that has grown through the centuries. All we can do is to lay that burden down before the Lord and to pray that He may make a new beginning. That beginning will be the leaven that leavens the whole dough. The words that at all times judge and direct our Christian life have their bearing also in the relationship between the races: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you".



# FROM THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENTS

## *Theology*

### **Annual Meeting of LWF Commission on Theology at Hildesheim, Germany**

The annual meeting of the LWF-Commission on Theology was held April 27—May 1 at Hildesheim, Germany. The following is an extract from the report of the Director of the Department of Theology, Dr. Vilmos Vajta, to the Commission.

#### **1. Introducing the Department of Theology to the Member Churches**

During the first year of its activity it was the most important task of the Department of Theology to inform the member churches and their theological working organs regarding the plans of the Department of Theology. From the very beginning it was decided that the Department of Theology should not introduce any new kind of work. Instead we should strive to stimulate the existing organs of the churches toward theological co-operation in order to render better service through contacts beyond the boundaries.

Everywhere I have taken pains both to interpret the work of the Department of Theology and the Commission on Theology of the LWF to the leaders of the churches, to the theological faculties and to the organs responsible for theological work in the churches, and to further a co-operation and co-ordination of the present working plans. Especially with regard to the theological faculties these personal conversations were of utmost importance. It is generally known that the theological faculties in Europe do not want to be automatically considered as "Lutheran" faculties, but as a matter of course want to carry out their work in liberty serving the evangelical theology. They take a negative attitude towards many church bonds. This statement can, of course, (not to speak of some few exceptions) be made only with regard to Europe. I think I have

acted in accordance with the wishes of the Commission in assuring the faculties that the Lutheran World Federation did not at all intend to interfere with their work but would be interested to learn how the continuous theological work of the faculties could best serve the entire work of Lutheran theology. I also believe that a further contact can only be established when the faculties have actually realized that it is only a problem of co-operation. Having once arrived at this point we will be met with sympathy by the faculties and can also render them service. For this very reason I am convinced that personal visits should form the basis of a permanent contact as far as possible with the representatives of the faculties and their work. Outside Europe the situation with regard to the theological faculties is different. The theological faculties outside Europe are free church institutions. Therefore we could expect to meet a much more open attitude. It was a special pleasure to learn, that, for instance, the Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois, USA held a forum as a result of which a valuable suggestion for the theological study work was submitted.

#### **2. The Study Program**

Two years have passed since Hannover. At the former meeting of the Commission on Theology we tried to find a way which would make possible the evaluation of Hannover and the grasping of the theological initiatives which originated there. Thereby the Commission on Theology decided to handle the tasks of study immediately before us in such a way, that the theological findings of Hannover should be employed and carried forward. This decision was quite right as a more careful continuation of the Hannover theme could only be considered incidental owing to other tasks which had to be taken care of immediately. Of course, this does not mean, that Hannover has been forgotten. But



it can be easily understood that the Lutheran churches have regarded the theological preparatory work for the Assembly of the World Council of Churches as an urgent necessity.

The Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston presents a practical possibility to prove the readiness for ecumenical co-operation within the Lutheran churches. Therefore our Commission on Theology decided last year to consider this as the main task of the study work for the year. Naturally the time we had at our disposal was too short to receive more than contributions from individual Lutheran theologians. It was impossible to suggest a discussion on the contributions in the member churches. However, I have the privilege of being able to report that the Department of Theology has received excellent contributions partly on the main theme and partly on the subsidiary topics.

A further point included in our last year's study program was the meaning of worship. These studies should be carried out in intimate co-operation between the commissions on Liturgy and Theology of the Lutheran World Federation. I have to admit that the remaining program of the Department of Theology has only offered the opportunity to carry out the very beginning of this study. So far only a few individual persons have been informed on these plans and the possibility of their co-operation has been discussed.

In this connection I want to refer to the fact that Dos. Peter Brunner (Heidelberg) and Regin Prenter (Aarhus) have been appointed as members of the Committee of the Faith and Order Commission having as its task to carry on the problems of the former "ways of worship" committee. Therefore we can, of course, count on the co-operation of these persons at our study, especially as the terms of reference for this committee are very similar to those which were worked out by ourselves for the study last year.

The problem of State and Church which was raised at Hannover by Bishop Berggrav was put on the wait-

ing list at the meeting of the Commission on Theology last year, i. e. we decided at that time to assume an attitude of waiting concerning the further work of the Lutheran churches and to make an evaluation according to future developments.

I can here only refer to the main facts in this direction.

To begin with, a statement of Lutheran theologians has been prepared for the Seminar on the Church and National Life at Alexandria Virginia, April 17 and 18, 1953 by a study commission consisting of Dos. Herman A. Preuss, Jaroslav J. Pelikan and George W. Forell which is called "the Word for the World"—toward a Lutheran View of Church and State". This statement is essential as it points towards a new orientation in American theology, i. e. it gives a review of the categoric separation between state and church and tries with the aid of real Lutheran theology to work out the line of contact between the two dimensions. I think that a continuation on this line would even be possible on the American continent and could become fruitful.

In Germany the Christophorus-Stift at Hemer (Kreis Iserlohn i. W.) has started a number of study conferences in order to appraise the ideas suggested by Bishop Berggrav from an exegetical and systematic point of view. So far already one conference has been held the results of which have been recorded. These minutes can certainly be made available for further study within world Lutheranism.

The Nordic German Conference of Pastors will arrange a meeting in Norway this summer and on its program especially the problem of State and Church has been taken up not only from the theological but also from the juridical point of view. We can look forward to a continued work regarding these problems with greatest interest and appreciation.

### 3. The Theological Conferences

Again during the past summer a number of theological conferences have been held in Europe to which guest lecturers of different member churches



ches both in USA and in Europe had been invited. Prof. Dr. Bodensieck was entrusted with the responsibility of planning these conferences and he took great pains regarding both the program and the lectures. The main theme of the conference was "The Holy Spirit establishes the Church". The conferences were held at the following places (however, only a few with the total program of eight lectures): Neuendettelsau, Loccum, Berlin, Järvenpää, Oslo, Strassburg, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Florence. Everywhere, the conferences were very much appreciated. In the two Scandinavian countries where such conferences had been held for the first time the number of participants was surprisingly high and generally the wish was expressed that the Lutheran World Federation should also render this service in the future. For this year two conferences are planned in Germany and one in England. For the first time such conferences, all together nine, are to be held in the United States and Canada in various places on that continent.

#### 4. Exchange of Personnel

In the past year we could only slowly begin with our exchange program for students, fraternal workers and professors. In the present academic year two French students in Strassburg are supported and six Yugoslavian theologians are able to study in Germany through the efforts of the Department of Theology. Further the Department has had contact with a number of other persons during the past year. Although means were at our disposal, a further exchange could not be effected due mainly to technical reasons, and it had to be postponed for some months.

Especially the Lutheran minority churches and the missionary churches have shown great interest in the exchange of professors. It is hoped that the isolation of these churches can be broken in such a way that guest professors co-operate in the instruction at the theological institutes. We certainly can imagine such a plan but the difficulties we are facing in this respect are

not so much on the financial side (though these too exist, of course) but the main question will be whether we can find persons willing and able to participate.

This concludes my annual report for the Department of Theology. I am fully conscious of the fact that the first year cannot produce outstanding results. In any case we have succeeded in finding a way for theological co-operation within world Lutheranism and to make an outline for future development. Many things could be done only in a provisional way. It was perhaps the most important task during this first year to invite our member churches to participate in a co-operative theological effort for world Lutheranism. We shall therefore, gratefully accept the manifold encouragement which has been given to us.

### *World Missions*

#### The Department of World Missions: The years of preparation

Lutheran cooperation in world missions was a cherished objective more than a hundred years before the Hannover Assembly of The Lutheran World Federation authorized the establishment of a Department of World Missions.

This objective of international co-operation was clearly set forth in the organization of the Leipzig Mission Society in 1836. In 1848, Dr. Carl Graul, the director, addressed an appeal to all Lutherans in all countries, aiming at the formation of a great, united, Lutheran missionary organization. There was a glad response in support from the confessional parts of Germany, from Scandinavia, the Baltic peoples, France, Hungary and from some congregations of the Synodical Conference in the United States. But when Dr. Graul went to India to work, the expansion of support faltered. Interest in world missions had been planted and grew rapidly, but it was deflected from international channels of expression and found its effective out-



let in the organization of a number of smaller mission societies whose membership was usually recruited within one nation. Thus, the impulse for international Lutheran cooperation in world missions was arrested, perhaps a prisoner of the spirit of the times, and kept so by the absence of proper facilities of communication.

70 years later, the economic havoc of World War I had left its enervating mark on Finnish and German mission societies. This knowledge moved Scandinavian, Australian and American brethren to provide gifts of money and personnel. During the period 1918—1930, the recently organized National Lutheran Council of the United States contributed a total of \$ 701,270.51. This help supplemented the resources of seven German mission societies working in Africa, China and India, and of two Finnish mission societies in China and Japan.

It was inevitable that the hands extended across oceans and national boundaries in a ministry of mission assistance and post-war rehabilitation would want to clasp those of European brethren in a fellowship that would persist after the emergency physical needs had receded. And so the Lutheran World Convention was organized at Eisenach in Germany in August 1923.

At this founding convention and at the two that followed at Copenhagen and Paris in 1929 and 1935 respectively, world missions claimed significant attention. There is little doubt but what Eisenach accelerated the impulses that resulted in the organization of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India in 1926. The will to cooperation stirred on other mission fields also, but practical results were few.

In 1939 the German mission fields were orphaned for a second time within 25 years. As Hitler pushed the frontiers of fighting up into the Scandinavian countries, the mission societies of Denmark, Finland and Norway were also cut off from sending any further funds to support their missionaries and the work of the churches in Africa and

Asia with whom they had been identified.

As early as in the summer of 1939, Dr. John R. Mott, chairman of the International Missionary Council, and Dr. A. L. Warnshuis, secretary in New York, traveled to Berlin to make plans for safeguarding mission interests in the event of war. Consultations followed in New York between Dr. Warnshuis and Dr. Ralph Long, then the director of the NLC. It was agreed that Lutherans would be responsible for assisting Lutherans, and the International Missionary Council would care primarily for non-Lutherans. Dr. Long and Dr. Warnshuis maintained close liaison for mutual assistance and to avoid overlapping. This consultation and exchange of information has continued under their respective successors.

In the Lutheran program of assistance the Church of Sweden Mission and the Swedish Evangelical Society gave generous help. A summary of the help provided by the Swedish societies was recorded by Dr. Norman Goodall in the *International Review of Missions* (Vol. 34, 1945, pages 189—190).

Help from the Lutheran churches of Canada and the United States was collected and administered by the NLC. During the period November 1, 1939—December 31, 1947, the grants for orphaned missions totaled \$ 2,563,039.23.

The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia provided assistance in personnel for the Neuendettelsau field in New Guinea.

The fourth Lutheran World Convention, scheduled to meet in Philadelphia in 1941, was pushed aside by the outbreak of war. But the Church's urge to manifest its brotherhood in Christ brought about a new meeting after the war, the founding assembly of The Lutheran World Federation in Lund, Sweden, June 30—July 6, 1947. This first assembly of the LWF served to energize the will of the churches to provide more generously for large areas of orphaned missions needs.

By consultation the Church of Sweden Mission Society assumed admini-



strative responsibility for the Bethel Mission Society's Bukoba field in Tanganyika. The Society then sought and received generous help in manning the field from the Danish Mission Society.

Similarly, the Swedish Evangelical Society accepted responsibility to supervise the work of the Berlin Mission Society's field in the Southern Highlands of Tanganyika. The Danish Lutheran and the Norwegian Lutheran Mission Societies were solicited and agreed to assist by providing selected staff requirements.

In January 1948, at the first post-Lund meeting of the NLC, a Commission on Younger Churches and Orphaned Missions was set up. Its specific responsibility was to administer the Council's orphaned missions grants. In the period January 1, 1948—December 31, 1952, the Commission administered funds provided by the Lutheran churches of Canada and the United States totaling \$ 3,483,875.56. This help was invested on 23 different mission fields served by two Finnish mission societies and 15 German societies.

No casual contact with orphaned missions can comprehend the prayers answered and the world-encircling flow of brotherly love released through this distribution of emergency gifts. Carl Graul's earlier dream of a larger measure of cooperation in Lutheran world missions was now becoming a necessity.

In response to a Lund Assembly resolution, the Executive Committee of the LWF at its annual meeting in 1948 (one hundred years after Dr. Graul's letter of appeal) appointed a Commission on World Missions. The Commission membership numbered six. But from the first meeting at Oxford, England, in July 1949, mission directors and board secretaries have been welcome associate members. Annual meetings of the Commission followed at Tutzing, Germany, in 1950; at Breklum, Germany, in 1951; at Hamburg and Hannover, Germany, in 1952; and at Bethel/Bielefeld, Germany in 1953.

The spirit of working together that emerged in CWM's meetings fortified the will to cooperate which has usu-

ally been present on the mission fields. Since 1949 the mission staffs of three groups have been united in New Guinea, and the new work begun by Lutherans in Taiwan has been started as a united work. Three churches merged to form a united Lutheran Church in Madagascar in 1950. Lutheran Mission Councils have been organized and are functioning in Ethiopia, South Africa, and Tanganyika; and an All-Lutheran Free Mission Conference has come into being in Japan. Lutheran Mission Councils are on the way to realization in Jordan and Israel; and the Federation of Lutheran Churches in India recently adopted a Doctrinal Statement for a proposed United Lutheran Church of India.

This growth in understanding made it increasingly clear that emergency assistance in world missions should be a formal responsibility of the whole Lutheran family, and therefore a function of the LWF. Insofar as practicable, the actual work should be administered by the Geneva office, and where not practicable, delegated to a national committee, but under accountability to the LWF for the trusteeship thus exercised.

CYCOM presented this point of view as a proposal to the Commission on World Mission's meeting at Hamburg in March, 1952. CWM endorsed the suggestion and passed it on as a recommendation to the Executive Committee of the LWF in session at Hannover during the days immediately preceding the opening of the Assembly. The Executive Committee adopted the proposal as set forth under the following three points:

1. All Lutheran Orphaned Missions work is an LWF responsibility;

2. The LWF Executive Committee assigns responsibility to the Commission on World Missions, which must report regularly to the Executive Committee;

3. The Commission on World Missions may delegate administration of specified blocks of work to given national committees and societies.

It was now clear that a Commission on World Missions without a full-time staff at the Geneva office was an im-



possibility, and so the Executive Committee recommended to the Hannover Assembly that a Department of World Missions be organized. The Assembly adopted the recommendation unanimously, and defined the function of the department as follows:

"The function of the Department of World Missions is to carry responsibility for orphaned missions, and in cooperation with an inclusive group of representatives from younger churches, the Lutheran mission boards and societies, to continue and extend the field of cooperation among the younger churches, the mission boards and societies."

The department is officially responsible to the Executive Committee of the Federation—particularly in the administration of orphaned missions assistance. However, the functional statement makes CWM—with all Lutheran mission board and mission society directors who may attend regarded as associate members—responsible for continuing and extending the field of cooperative work. CWM has therefore become in effect the board for the Department of World Missions. In this connection it is to be noted that the new Commission appointed by the Executive Committee at Hannover numbers in its six members one from India and one from Japan.

October 1, 1952, the Department of World Missions office was set up at the Federation headquarters at 17 route de Malagnou, Geneva. But the Executive Committee's budget had no allocations available for a director until May 1, 1954. CYCOM was therefore asked to loan its executive secretary as a part-time director of the Department of World Missions for the 18 month's interval.

Effective January 1, 1953, CYCOM relinquished to LWF/DWM administration of emergency mission assistance in South Africa, Southwest Africa, Ethiopia, Borneo, Hong Kong and Japan. But supervision of help provided in Indonesia, Jordan, New Guinea and Tanganyika, East Africa, remained under CYCOM in 1953 and will continue thus throughout 1954.

March 31, 1954, CYCOM voted to relinquish administration of assistance for all fields except Tanganyika. The only reason for excepting Tanganyika is because of the Government's ruling that the former German mission properties be vested in an American corporation. LWF-CWM will take action on this offer at its next meeting in Hoekelum, Holland, October 22—29, 1954.

The cooperation in Lutheran world missions that has been growing since the Lund Assembly in 1947 has been born of the necessity of the post-war years—imposed by the Lord of the Church through the events of history. It has happened while we have been pressed by "a thorn in the flesh".

### Now What of the Future?

Will this good work which God has begun in and through the LWF continue toward fulfillment in His purpose?

I, for one, will record the conviction that it will. But there are some obvious conditions:

1. The cooperation of mission boards and societies must continue in free association and consultation, seeking that unanimity which God's Holy Spirit alone confers;

2. In this cooperation there must be alert recognition of the signs of our times with consequent willingness to proclaim and apply God's truth in every critical situation—to illustrate:

- (1) A will among missions and missionaries to believe in indigenous leadership with a specific plan for training several people for each of the key positions in the Church and its institutions;

- (2) A recognition among churchmen of Africa and Asia that autonomy is always under God's judgment—pride is an affliction of our humanity from which the East is no more immune than the West;

- (3) A willingness among churches and mission societies to support world missions even though there may be less call for Western missionaries;



(4) A steady retrenchment in "orphaned missions" help in favor of unencumbered funds that may be mobilized on fronts of special need—seizing new opportunities and strengthening key churches in discharging essential tasks;

(5) Frequent self-examination, allowing God's spirit to reveal our deficiencies and our lethargy;

(6) Global planning with other Christian churches to meet the anti-Christian ideologies of this generation;

(7) A major emphasis on evangelism: "...This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

These illustrations suffice. As long as LWF-DWM continues to assist the mission societies and boards and the churches of Africa and Asia to do God's work in this generation, so long will the Department be a blessing — no longer.

Frederik A. Schiotz

### An Open Letter to Lutheran Missionaries and Churchmen of Afrika and Asia

In an open letter of more than ordinary length it is well that the writer identifies himself at once. That is to revert to the practice of the New Testament epistles. And perhaps it is not amiss to use the specific speech which they employ. It would therefore follow:

Fred Schiotz, called of God in the summer of 1948 through an act of the Executive Committee of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to serve as chairman of the Federation's Commission on World Missions (CWM—pronounce COOM), to the men and women who serve Christ in the Lutheran churches and missions of Africa and Asia: Grace and peace!

Since the summer of 1949, when the first meeting of CWM was held, I have often wanted to write to you. In the necessity of traveling much with a number of initial organizational pro-

blems and a limited staff, I hesitated to initiate a practice that would increase an already sizable load. But now—May 1, 1954—we are negotiating a growth transition which should be noted by you all. I refer to this day's assumption of the office of director of the Federation's Department of World Missions by Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli, formerly of Stavanger, Norway.

### Introducing the Rev. Fridtjov Birkeli, D. Th.

Fridtjov Søyland Birkeli was born of missionary parents in Tuléar, Madagascar, April 23, 1906. Preparatory school training was obtained in Stavanger, Norway. Advanced study was done at the University of Oslo and at the Independent Theological Faculty of Oslo, where he was granted the Bachelor of Theology degree in 1930. In 1932—33 he studied French in Paris. He became a missionary of the Norwegian Mission Society in 1934, serving in West Madagascar during the years 1934—1937, and as a professor of practical theology and New Testament in the Union Lutheran Theological Seminary at Ivory, Fianarantsoa, in 1937—1944. A period of illness during the war years and some months immediately following was invested in convalescence, study, and writing, which took him to South Africa for nine months in 1944—1945, and to the United States for one year in 1946—1947. Health completely restored, he was called by his society as Literature Secretary and has filled that post until his resignation March 31, 1954, to accept the LWF appointment.

The University of Oslo granted Director Birkeli a doctor of theology degree in 1953 on the basis of a comprehensive thesis *Politics and Missions*, a study of relations between Government and missionaries in Madagascar during the period 1861—1875. There have been two other books: *The Norwegian Mission Society's History in Central Madagascar* and a *Commentary on Galatians* (in the Malagasy language); and a number of articles in mission journals.

Dr. Birkeli is a member of the Académie Malgache and the Advisory Committee for the London Secretariate of the International Missionary Council. He was a delegate at the International Missionary Council's conference in Willingen and at the LWF Assembly in Hannover, both meetings in the summer of 1952. He will be a member of the Church of Norway delegation at the World Council of Churches' Assembly in Evanston in August.

April 16, 1942, Dr. Birkeli married Miss Borghild Sandbeck who at that time was a teacher at the Normal School at Fianarantsoa. They have a daughter Anna-Lene born June 26, 1948. The family will move to Geneva in October to make their home at rue Athénée.

Whenever someone is appointed or elected to an important position in the Church's work, drawing room or street corner small talk rarely assumes that the procedures of Acts 6: 3 and 13: 2 may have been used. The usual question, spoken or inferred, is: What maneuver was used to secure this appointment?

To the end that genuine acceptance may be given Dr. Birkeli until such time as your acquaintance with him will establish it, permit me to outline the manner in which we believe the Holy Spirit directed the selection. The accepted procedures required that CWM should nominate and the Executive Committee would elect. As chairman of CWM, I knew that a matter as important as this would require more attention than what a nominating committee could sandwich in between the crowded sessions of the annual Commission meeting.

The search for a candidate began with the premise that, if at all possible, no American should be considered, for there were already several Americans on the Geneva staff. Consequently, no American mission board secretaries

were asked to submit candidate names. Exploratory conversations with European mission society representatives began in the fall of 1952 and continued as travel schedules provided opportunity. In these contacts the functioning mission committees in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden were asked to be ready to submit candidate names for the meeting of CWM at Bethel/Bielefeld in July 1953. A letter to the officers of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches of India submitted a similar request to the Lutheran churches of that country.

The Commission meeting at Bethel/Bielefeld placed two names in nomination for the consideration of the Executive Committee. Before the Executive Committee proceeded to election, one of the candidates served notice that it would not be possible for him to accept if elected. Dr. Birkeli was thereupon elected unanimously on a first ballot.

As CYCOM relinquishes more and more work to LWF-DWM, the burdens of administration will steadily increase. Plans are already under way to try to provide more help for Dr. Birkeli. The director of the Department must not get bogged down in administrative detail to the extent that he cannot scan the horizons to help interpret for us the mood of our generation, and to alert us to points where the battle line may be sagging.

Many have inquired about what I am going to do. God willing, I expect to continue as executive secretary of CYCOM. Good missionaries plan their work so that they may become dispensable. Likewise, if CYCOM passes out of the picture we shall count it gain rather than loss. And meanwhile, at least until the next assembly in 1957, I will continue at Director Birkeli's side as chairman of the Commission on World Missions.

Frederik A. Schiotz



## *World-Service*

### **A Plan for Coordinating the Solicitation and Distribution of Material Relief**

In order to achieve a good distribution of material relief among the member churches of LWF and other areas of need, the Department of World Service has elaborated the following plan after which these gifts are to be solicited and distributed.

There are millions of creatures of God in the world today, who are "hungry, naked and sick" who desperately need food, clothing and medical supplies. The events of the last ten years have brought about tragic human misery in all parts of the world—the refugees of the Near East, the homeless of war-torn Korea, the refugees who are still in camps in Austria and Germany, the wanderers among the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong.

A number of the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, moved by the Grace of God in Jesus Christ and stabbed by the pain of those who daily sit in misery, have developed extensive programs for material relief. Literally, millions of tons of clothing, food and medical supplies have been gathered by those member churches of LWF and their designated agencies and shipped to all parts of the world. We are convinced that other member churches will similarly respond if the need were brought to their attention and information given as to methods of meeting the need.

When the Department of World Service of the LWF was created by the Hannover Assembly, it was recommended that among the objectives of the Department there would be the following "to assist the churches of the Federation on an international level in meeting their common needs" and "to meet quickly the special emergency needs in crises that may arise around the world".

Still later, in the Charter for the Department of World Service, which has been approved by the Commission on World Service and the Executive Committee of LWF, are to be found among others, the following objectives, namely:

"To provide the member churches a common international Lutheran agency, available to them as they seek to meet in Christian love and compassion human need as it may develop in the world.

To conduct surveys and studies in order to determine the nature and extent of human needs throughout the world and disseminate this information among the member churches.

To approach member churches and national committees, seeking to secure their support of specific activities and projects in LWS through financial grants, material goods and/or personnel.

To coordinate resources placed at its disposal by member churches."

During the first year of its development, LWF-WS has given much time to matters of administration such as staff, finance, and in matters of program in the areas of inter-church aid and services to refugees. We feel that we are now ready to plan the coordinating of solicitation and distribution of material relief among member churches of the LWF and in other areas of need.

### **Purposes of the Program**

As we inaugurate this phase of the program of LWF-WS in the area of solicitation and distribution of material relief, we propose the following purposes which we would seek to accomplish.

1. Secure accurate data on needs for material relief with respect to nature and volume in present areas of human suffering in the world and in the future where special emergencies may arise.

2. Gather information on transport and shipping facilities and customs regulations.

3. To approach "giving" member churches of the LWF and/or their designated agencies with suggested projects where material relief is needed and provide such technical information which may be necessary, such as shipping, customs, local distributing agency.



4. To coordinate solicitation and distribution so as to prevent over supply in certain areas with full or partial neglect of others.

5. To work in close cooperation with other related international agencies which function in the solicitation and distribution of material relief.

### **Implementation of the Program**

In implementing the program, LWF-WS sets forth the following which describes and delineates areas of responsibility:

1. Responsibility for initiating and supervising the program is placed in the office of the Deputy Director, LWF-WS.

2. In those areas where LWF-WS maintains Senior Representatives, the Deputy Director will carry forward programs of solicitation and/or distribution of relief in cooperation with such Senior Representatives. In other areas, the Deputy Director will make direct approach to member church, national committee or appropriate designated agency.

3. In the solicitation and distribution of material goods, full use will be made of the recognized agencies of member churches of LWF where they exist and their autonomy will be respected and recognized at all times.

4. Senior Representatives in areas of need will submit estimates of need to Deputy Director, who in turn will approach member churches and national committees and invite their participation and support. All requests in the name of LWF-WS to member churches and national committees for contributions of material relief will be made by the Geneva office of LWF-WS or with its knowledge and concurrence.

5. The program will be developed in full cooperation with other departments of LWF, particularly Department of World Missions in those areas under its responsibility, and the Department of Information. As experience is gained, specific procedures and methods will be jointly developed and agreements reached.

Henry Whiting

### **LWF and Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration**

At the last (7th) session of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration which closed on Saturday, May 1st, special tribute was paid by the director, US Ambassador Hugh Gibson, to the work of the voluntary agencies in the resettlement program. "In considering the relationships established", he said in part, "the delegates are invited to recall the traditional role of these voluntary agencies in the work of refugee re-establishment and the wealth of experience and membership support which they bring to the field of over-seas individual migration. Through the churches, offices and counter-part national, religious, ethnic, social and labour groups throughout the free world, these agencies have international networks which are uniquely qualified to carry out successfully the start-to-finish task of individual migration."

The Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration was established in December 1951 following a suggestion of the United States. It comprises as members the Governments of 20 nations. The Committee is the most important intergovernmental organization to work on the problem of excess population in Europe. A further characteristic of its activities is its co-operation with voluntary agencies.

Twelve voluntary agencies were selected by its administration, of which the most effective in the field of resettlement became the American Joint Distribution Committee the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the International Catholic Migration Commission, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation.

In the Director's Report, the work of the Lutheran World Federation/Department of World Service (LWF) is described as follows:

"The Lutheran World Federation/Department of World Service (LWF)



commenced its international migration operations in 1947 in order to help in the resettlement of Lutheran Displaced Persons in co-operation with the International Refugee Organisation. The LWF, with head quarters in Geneva, Switzerland, is the international organisation which co-ordinates the world-wide activities of the Lutheran Churches. Its principal counterparts in the field of migration are the National Lutheran Council in the United States, the Canadian Lutheran World Relief in Canada, and the Evangelisches Hilfswerk in Germany. The Agency maintains offices or counterpart Lutheran agencies in Austria, Germany, France, Italy, Trieste, Great Britain, Sweden, Hong Kong, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Venezuela. LWF also maintains correspondents in all other immigration countries. All LWF-offices and counterpart agencies are officially recognized by the governments of the respective country. LWF is supported by contributions from the Lutheran Church groups and various foundations as well as by grants from the Committee."

Further reference is given to LWF activities in a paragraph devoted to the World Council of Churches Service to Refugees (WCC):

"It should be noted that while the Lutheran Churches are members of and support the WCC, the Lutherans operate their own independent migration service as well as closely co-operating with the work of WCC."

30,863 migrants were moved in 1952 and 1953 through the co-operation of the voluntary agencies with the Inter-governmental Committee. Out of this total figure by far the largest number of resettlers namely 7,820 have been moved by Lutheran World Federation; the World Council of Churches follows with 5,376, and the International Catholic Migration Commission with 4,469.

LWF was able to advance \$ 1,153,180.53 to resettlers out of its own Resettlement Revolving Loan Fund, which fund is being subsidized by the Migration Committee. Out of the total loans made during 1952 and 1953 more than

35 % had already been repaid by the end of 1953. Also in this respect LWF leads in having the highest percentage of loans recovered. This figure is particularly important, because it shows that the resettlers who were helped by LWF found the most favorable conditions.

## Information

### Pastor Peter Fraenkel leaves the Work of LWF

On May 1 of this year Pastor P. Fraenkel M. A., B. Th. left the work of the Lutheran World Federation. In terms of length of service, Pastor Fraenkel was the oldest member on the staff of Geneva Headquarters of LWF. Ordained by the Lutheran Church of France at Paris in 1948 he spent two years ministering to several congregations in France before he began as assistant of the then Executive Secretary Dr. S. C. Michelfelder. Already at the end of his service in France he had been responsible for the Service Evangélique de Presse et d'Information, edited by Pastor Rosenstiehl. Also in Geneva he was soon in charge of publicity for the LWF and worked on the English edition of the News Bulletin, which had been edited by Dr. Michelfelder since the end of 1946.

The year 1949/50 was in various respects a time of changes in the publicity work of the LWF. The journal edited by the Federation since July 1948, with its two different issues, the Lutheran World Review in the United States and the Lutherische Rundschau in Germany ceased publication in October 1950 (the German edition already in summer 1949). Likewise the News Bulletin came out in its two versions only until the end of 1950. In summer 1950 the Executive Committee voted at its meeting in Tutzing, Germany for a new set up of LWF press work. By this decision the two present publications of the Lutheran World Federation were created:

the *Lutherische Rundschau* (in German) and the *Information Service*, which is issued in English about 10 times over the year. While Dr. Hermann Ullmann was responsible for the *Rundschau*, Pastor Fraenkel was the editor of the *Information Service*. The latter with its inclusive and at the same time detailed information has in the three years of its existence widened its scope and usefulness and is today the most important source of current information on the work of LWF. In the last few issues it has more and more adopted the method of devoting each number to a particular region (East Zone Germany, Africa, Asia, etc.). Pastor Fraenkel has succeeded in his reports to an amazing degree in getting valuable information from widely separated areas.

Pastor Fraenkel also established from 1951 a special news service, whose releases were sent as quickly as possible to press and news agencies. The press work of many Lutheran churches has received valuable encouragement from LWF press service.

In many places new work began under its influence. In connection with that a picture file and an article service was organized.

Pastor Fraenkel has created the basis for the newly established Department of Information, which will now have to initiate fresh responsibilities following structural changes of LWF itself. The new departmental organization at Headquarters as well as the coordination of the two branches of publicity (the editorial work for the journal, and the release of current news) will necessitate changes in the information work of the Federation. This Department will function more and more in the service of the other departments, but at any rate it can look back already on several years of publicity experience. I am grateful for this opportunity to render thanks and recognition for the important preparatory work which the great abilities and personal devotion of Pastor Fraenkel have given to the new Department of Information.

Hans Bolewski



## COUNTRY REPORTS

### *Holy Land*

#### LWF Work in Holy Land

The churches of Germany have been engaged in special missionary tasks in the Middle East for a number of decades. The institutional program of the groups from Germany was one of the most extensive of any Protestant group in the world. The two world wars transformed this work to such an extent that in the Israel part of Palestine all the institutions, with the exception of church buildings, have been disposed of after several years of negotiation. In the Arab parts of Palestine the buildings have been returned for use according to purposes originally intended.

The Lutheran World Federation has become heavily involved largely through the efforts and program of the U. S. National Committee and its Commission on Younger Churches and Orphaned Missions. At the time that it was still impossible for the German societies to function, the efforts of the U. S. Lutherans came as a welcome and necessary action. The responsibility for the administration of these properties and the continuation of the program was accepted by the U. S. churches on the principle of trusteeship with the clear understanding that such work should eventually be returned to its original societies when they were prepared to do so financially.

The war in Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 created an additional responsibility and heavier work than originally intended or visualized. The more than 800,000 Arab refugees are a problem which concerns the Arab countries, the state of Israel and all the nations organized in the United Nations. The Christian concern for these refugees in which our Lutheran churches have played a major role is to give aid to these needy peoples.

The plight for the Arab refugees is one which cannot be adequately de-

scribed in words or pictures. Here you have families living in tents for as long as 6 years without work, existing on the hand-outs of the United Nations which has hardly been enough to give adequate nourishment and clothing. The high incidence of disease, malnutrition, is unbelievable. Crowded together as they are in these tent camps in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Gaza strip, their situation instead of becoming better is worsening.

It was this situation which faced those who were directing the Lutheran work in Jordan. Since 1948 thousands of tons of clothing, millions of dollars worth of extra food supplies and vast amounts of medicine have been contributed by the Lutherans of America particularly to programs in Jordan and Syria. At the present time a most extensive service to these thousands of refugees continues in these two countries. The tragic fact is that the need of these refugees in 1954 is worse than it was in 1948. It must be said that in this relief action our LWF policy of aiding refugees regardless of race, creed or political affiliation has resulted in some remarkable developments. It is a fact that a high regard for the Christian Church has grown up as a result of aid to the needy. The muslim leaders have a new respect for Christianity which can come with food and clothing and which does not ask anything in return. A climate of tolerance has been developed where it is possible for the Christian groups to continue. This situation is the reverse of what is normally true in Mohammedan lands today.

In addition to the relief program, which is still operating in such an extensive way, the schools and congregations are still the major responsibility of LWF until such time as the home societies can take over the work again. These schools are sources for the future growth of the Christian congregations. It must be said that at the present moment the work of organizing



and developing the congregational life is of major importance for the future of Lutheranism in the Middle East. The arrival of the new dean Pastor Weigelt is one evidence that this task will be carried on with great vigor. Several clergy of the Arab race are already working in the congregations and happily several are in training both in Germany and the United States. The urgency of developing local leadership and initiative is as great here as in other lands today where westerners are coming more and more under suspicion.

Another important item in this work is that it brings our Lutheran Church into contact with many of the older Christian churches which have institutions here. With the exception of Ethiopia our program touches more of these churches in Jerusalem than anywhere else in the world. It has been interesting to see the respect of the leaders of these churches for our work and leaders. One can almost speak of love and affection. As yet there have been no attempts to channel these contacts into any type of theological or ecclesiastical discussions. Such developments can take place only as the opportunity and time afford them.

The emergence of international efforts on the part of United Nations and at the same time international Christian work has led to interesting patterns of cooperation. The example of the Augusta Victoria Hospital is a vivid illustration of the fact that the large secular groups have been led to see the value of these international Christian organizations.

The United Nations Relief and Works Administration provides funds to the LWF for the operation of this hospital on the Mount of Olives. This Hospital of about 350 beds, one of the largest in this part of the world is used for medical aid to refugees. Without aid from UNRWA, the LWF would have great difficulty in maintaining this institution. Without the LWF administering it, UNRWA on the other hand would have difficulty in finding facilities to give medical care to the refugees. Thus this partnership works to the benefit

of both groups and primarily to the help of the refugees. This pattern of cooperation is one of the postwar phenomena in many areas of the world.

It is useless to predict the future. However discussions are now going on between the German societies and the Commission on World Missions as to the outlines of the work in this area of the world. It is a joy to report that these discussions can be carried forward on the basis of mutual trust and confidence among the societies in Germany and between LWF and these societies.

In these turbulent areas of the world our charges have only one commission. To fulfill this is our task at the moment.

Carl E. Lund-Quist

## *Brazil*

### To the Memory of President Ferdinand Schlünzen DD

On February 26th at five o'clock in the afternoon, the pastors of the synodical district of Joinville, many representatives of the other congregations of the synod, and most important of all, the congregation of Jaragua I, stood at the grave of their venerated president.

The preceding day about 11.00 p.m. following his return from a presidents' conference at Sao Leopoldo, God took him unto Himself. He had served his church for almost 52 years.

President Ferdinand Schlünzen was born August 28, 1880 and took his training at the Auslandsseminar at Neuen-dettelsau. Following his ordination on Ascension Day May 8, 1902 in the church of his home congregation at Hamburg he went to Brazil and began an arduous pioneer task in the parish of Bruedertal. In 1907 he went to the congregation of Jaraguá which had just been established. To its development he devoted all his strength both as teacher and as preacher. President Schlünzen belongs to the small group of Lutheran pastors who initiated in 1905 the establishment of the "Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Santa Ca-



tharina, Paraná, and other States". In 1923 his congregation was divided into two parishes, Jaragua I and Jaraguá II, the first remaining his own parish. 1933 he became president of synod, after serving as treasurer almost continuously since 1916. Two years later he returned home to Germany. Because of his gifts and abilities the Aussenamt of the German Churches at Berlin, appointed him as its "permanent representative" to our church. In this capacity he took over the office of church leadership for a second time in the coming year. The second world war with all its accompanying hardships hampered his activities for several years. Immediately after the war, however, the work could be continued without difficulties. The congregation began to live again, and whenever they called for their president he was sure to come.

But his commitments went beyond his own synod. The achievement of mutual contact between the four Evangelical Synods and later of the "Federation of Synods" (one day to become a single Lutheran churchbody) is due to the efforts of two men—the Federation President D. Dohms and the Synodical President Ferdinand Schlünzen. May 21—25 our synod met at Jaragua, to celebrate the "golden jubilee" of our president. It was a great joy to him, that his congregations presented him at this jubilee in addition to other honours with the means to build his own home in his old parish. Once again he was allowed to see his home country together with his wife. The degree of Doctor of Divinity from Wittenberg College, Springfield/Ohio, was bestowed upon him at the Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation at Hannover. He received this honour as the "pioneer of Lutheran work in the diaspora".

The work of a man cannot be separated from his person. To value the one, it is necessary to know the other. Therefore, though being many years his junior, I may be permitted to sketch some remarkable traits of his character. President Schlünzen came from Hamburg and with all his modesty he had the Hanseatic taste for

good manners of social contact, to the extent that he might have been called reserved or even reticent. He did not say all he thought. We had to get used to his taciturnity. In *Espirito Santo*, I remember it well from my first years, he had the reputation of a hard man, of whom everybody was afraid. This opinion suddenly changed when he visited us for the first time and we discovered, that this man could laugh, that he had a heart for the individual and that he who sought his heart would find it. He was a Lutheran Christian who strongly detested sentimentality and bigotry. From his pastors he expected punctuality and discipline and he exerted these virtues himself. As an Evangelical Christian he was far from any kind of legalism. He looked upon the world as God's creation in which we have to fulfill his tasks. He objected against any kind of escapism following the example of the great apostle who once said: "All are yours, and you are Christ's."

His sermons and addresses were not dogmatic. This does not mean that he would not have fully expressed the truth of the gospel, but it means that he spoke the language of his time and, avoiding all abstract phraseology, knew how to talk to the man of today.

This is all the more remarkable since he had little opportunity—all Brazil pastors know about this hardship—to meet with outstanding theologians, to study and to exchange ideas, which is easier in most other countries. When he spoke to the congregation one immediately felt all the warmth of the inner life of this man who appeared to be so cool otherwise. He was able to endure everything for his church. When we pastors were arrested in 1942, our president was among us. Without any hesitation he went through everything which can be implied in the word "prisoner". One day, when we were led to our working area, he said to me: "Now we are both preachers as well as congregation." He saw the guiding hand of God in these events. Although by far the oldest and not of strong health he was a real model to his younger colleagues.



He was deeply concerned about his German homecountry. When in Joinville the fall of Berlin was celebrated, I was with him for a few minutes. He sat at his desk in deep sorrow. He was wrestling with himself as one who has to bury old hopes but who at any rate wants to continue living and hoping, and he knew what he would have to do. He went to work, to his work. There was something more important to him than affection for his earthly fatherland, as much as he loved it; "He looked for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Dr. Schlünzen's name will continue to be connected with the history of the Lutheran Church in Brazil. Also our brethren all over the world who stand behind our work with their help and their prayers, think of him in gratitude. Above all, however, we hope to be led to Him, to Whom he bore witness both in his writing and preaching and from Whom he himself received everything.

Friedrich Wüstner

## Hong Kong

### There's a Man on the Roof

If you found a jobless man asleep during the day, you might fancy that he was lazy and undeserving. You might think so because you have not been jobless in a city of refuge yourself, and you do not know that despair encourages sleep. Tramp the pavement for months, have a hundred people shake their heads at you, get your name on a hundred hopeless lists, watch your small resources dwindle until you have nothing left—nowhere to live, nothing to eat, no more clothes than the few things you wear, nothing to read, no one to talk to. All that is left is sleep.

Mr. Wang had been comfortable in a job in the Shanghai Post Office. He had graduated from a middle school. He came of a respectable family. He had his ideals and came to Hong Kong in search of freedom. When there was no other way left of passing the time,

he camped on a certain rooftop, and slept.

Of all the thousands of rooftops in Hong Kong, he chanced to stretch himself out over 37 Granville Road... and so this account comes to be written.

A lady of the staff of the Lutheran World Service Office found Mr. Wang on the roof one morning, asleep. The Director looked into the matter. Wang told his story. He was sent for a haircut. Someone was sent to buy a shirt and a pair of shoes, a bowl, a wash cloth, and a piece of soap. An old desk was dragged to the top of the stairway. Wang is now watchman, day and night. He has something to eat and something to do. Nothing like a comfortable post office job, but now there is no need to sleep all day, and his self-respect is in better shape.

He may be feeling dazed still. People don't usually do these things. On most rooftops he would have been submitted to the house dogs or the police, and so back to the tread-mill of discouragement with a record against him as an additional burden. Happily for him he chanced to fall asleep where Christian work and living is the order. It is when the churches of the world maintain vigilance that Christ is fed, clothed, and cheered.

"...ye did it unto Me!"

Jack Shepherd

## Slovakia

### A New Publication on the History of Lutheranism in Slovakia

Adalbert Hudak, *Die Kirche unserer Väter. Weg und Ende des deutschen Luthertums in der Slowakei.* Stuttgart 1953, Hilfskomitee für die Evang.-luth. Slowakeideutschen.

Hudak's book directs our attention to the Lutheran Church in the Carpathian region, about which average church histories mention hardly more than a few names and dates. This church, however, is one of the most remarkable witnesses of the Augsburg Confession because of its age, the hardships it suffered, and the trials which it experienced. Its



history begins in the very first years of the Reformation, and the men who committed themselves to the cause of the Gospel were in close contact with Wittenberg. The German towns in which Luther's language was spoken, were the first to welcome the Reformation and by this became its mediators for the other nationalities of Hungary. In order to give a clear understanding of the beginning as well as of the later history, Hudak has dealt with his subject in a much wider sense than one would guess by the title of his book. He opens with the period of settlement, the political and ecclesiastical history of the whole territory before the Reformation, to show then, how the Lutheran Church got involved into the very unsteady political developments of Hungary. He, who does not yet know what counter-Reformation means, may learn it from the oppressions and sufferings of our brethren in the faith in the Carpathian district. It is heartrending to read, how this minority church was faced with extinction time and again, how it was decimated, but also how it survived through the centuries by faith and incomparable sacrifices. The pictures added to the text give

a vivid impression of the stately churches which were built and of the excellent school system which was established after tolerance had been granted. Hudak writes without any particular pathos. He has very well disposed of his vast material and now lets the facts speak for themselves. His narration goes to the end of the "Deutsche Evangelische Landeskirche A. B." in Slovakia, which in 1938 in agreement with the Slovak Lutheran Church had become independent. It was completely destroyed in 1945, and its members are today scattered over all continents of the earth. At the end of the book in addition to a map a chart is given on the structure of church leadership, on the congregations, pastors, inspectors, choirmasters, on church registers as well as on its welfare institutions and schools before the expulsion. Hudak's book will help to preserve the picture of the home church to all its scattered members. But it deserves to be published and read also in the other churches of our creed. Even with all its scholarly thoroughness it is so interestingly written, that it is bound to attract more than theologians to its reading audience.

Werner Elert

## Schedule of Meetings in 1954

South American Lutheran Conference .....	July 20—23, Rio de Janeiro
Committee on Latin America .....	July 24—25, Rio de Janeiro
Commission on Lutheran World Service .....	Aug. 5—7, New York
LWF Executive Committee .....	Aug. 8—9, New York
Pre-Evanston Lutheran Conference. ....	Aug. 13—14, Chicago, Theological Seminary
Lutheran Communion Service at Evanston .....	Aug. 24, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Evanston
Commission on Stewardship and Congregational Life .....	Oct. 14—20, North Germany
Commission on World Missions ....	Oct. 22—29, Hoekulum, Holland

## OUR AUTHORS

*Julius Bodensieck*, Professor of Bible at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Du-buque, Iowa since 1953. The article "Translated Theology?" of this issue is a lecture delivered by Prof. Bodensieck on the occasion of his installation in Wartburg Seminary, where he served previously 1921/30 and 1948/50. Dr. Bodensieck, who was born at Hameln, Germany, was ordained as Pastor of the American Lutheran Church in 1917. He spent a great deal of his life to foster closer relationships between America and Europe, especially in the years following the last war. He is known to many in Europe as the organizer of the American European Theological Conferences.

*Gerhard Brennecke*, Director of the Berlin Missionary Society (Berlin I), visited the South African missions of the Berlin Society in 1951/52 with the help of the Church Missionary Society. He reported on the experiences of his trip in a book "Brüder im Schatten" (Brethren in the Shadow—Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin). On behalf of the Lutheran World Federation Brennecke was to study the racial problem in South Africa and to report to the Commission on World Mis-sions. Also on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation he initiated steps for closer co-operation between Lutheran Missions, which resulted in the formation of a Lutheran Mission and Church Council in South Africa. Gerhard Brennecke belongs to the section on racial questions of the Evanston Conference.

*Robert E. van Deusen*, Secretary of the Washington Office for Public Relations of the National Lutheran Council. From 1934 to 1944 the Reverend van Deusen served as Pastor at Rhinebeck, Richmondville, and Tampa/Fla. 1945 he became Director of the Lutheran Service Center in Washington, D. C. He organized the establishment of the Washington Office of the N.L.C.'s Division of Public Relations and was also in 1948 Secretary of the Bureau of Service to Military Personnel.

*Hanns Lilje*, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hannover, President of the Lutheran World Federation. As general secretary of the German Students Christian Movement and as vice-chairman of the World Students Christian Move-ment Bishop Lilje had the opportunity to gather ecumenical experiences at an early age. 1935 he became executive secretary of the Lutheran World Convention. In 1952 he was elected president of the Lutheran World Federation. In addition Bishop Lilje is president of the Chamber of Publicity of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland. 1948 he was chairman of section I of the Amsterdam Conference of the World Council of Churches.

*Regin Prenter*, Professor of dogmatics at the University of Aarhus (Denmark). He was guest professor in Germany, Sweden, Finland, France, Switzerland and the USA. Dr. Prenter is chairman of the Commission on Theology and member of the Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Federation.

*Gustaf Wingren*, Professor of Dogmatics at the University of Lund (Sweden). He received his Doctor of Theology from Lund in 1942, previously he had been assistant to Dr. Lietzmann, well known church historian at Berlin University. He was guest professor in Germany and Denmark and is a member of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches. As member of the Advisory Commis-sion for the main theme he played a major part in the preparation of the Evanston Conference.



## OUR FIRST ISSUE

*With this issue the Lutheran World (Lutherische Rundschau) appears for the first time in its new shape, for the first time as a quarterly, for the first time in two parallel editions, English and German. In this respect it continues a concern of the former Lutheran World Review, and it would like to be the journal which can be understood by Lutherans all over the world and which serves them as a medium for discussion and information.*

*As editor I have to confess that I have become increasingly aware of the greatness of the task during the work on the present issue, to the extent, that I have sometimes encountered a feeling of frustration. Anyone who has once faced such a work of translating or rather the possibility of translating our thoughts from one language into another, from one tradition of thinking into another, will never share the fear that the unification of all the Lutherans bears in itself the danger of ecclesiastical uniformity. The contrary is true. It is only necessary to study this present copy very carefully in order to realize the breadth but also the tensions between the forces that exist in World Lutheranism. For some this may be even confusing. But the editor has not seen his task as smoothing over the tensions and contrasts between the various contributions. We should not only talk about these tensions, but together we should be concerned about them in a fraternal way, and we invite all our readers to have their share in the discussion which is now commencing. Already in the next issue if possible we want to give adequate space to all critical contributions from our readers. It is not only the scholars that are engaged in this discussion, it concerns all of us. If in preparation for Evanston we think about Christ as the hope of the world, we are not engaged in special problems of theology, but in questions of practical, i.e. of political, economic and personal life. For every word which a Christian speaks to the world, it is decisive whether he expects the "last things" in or beyond history. Does he hope for a historic forerunner of the Kingdom of God, a millenium (Chiliasm) or a conversion of all, even of the evil powers in the course of history (Apokatastasis)? In his earthly actions is he guided by obedience and by love or does he face the events of the world and its history with carelessness or frustration?*

*In this sense theological thinking is simply following the demand of the New Testament to watch and be sober. We want it to be understood in this way.*

*In the present issue we have admittedly given more space to theological problems in the strict sense of the word than will be the case in the future. We have done this at the expense of national and departmental reports as well as book reviews, to all of which more space will be given. The main concern of this issue is to aid Lutheran preparation for the Conference at Evanston. The next issue, too, however, will still be largely devoted to the themes of this Conference. The discussion of the section themes will be continued, with contributions that are still lacking in this issue, namely, section I (Faith and Order), section II (Evangelism), section III (Social Questions) and section VI (Laity). Moreover, we shall come back to the main theme with a contribution by T. A. Kantonen on Christ the hope of those, who are outside the church.*

*So we send out this first issue. We know that much in it is only a beginning. We believe, however, that it is a good start, that we are able to begin the discussion of the Lutheran World Federation in this magazine with the theme of the church and the Christian hope. For this beginning points to the aim which our journal wants to serve, while facing our existing diversities in all honesty, the aim for which our Lord prayed with His Disciples in the hour when he parted from them:*

*Ut omnes unum sint.*

*Hans Bolewski*

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